NATION

INDIA will win over 295 seats: Kharge

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BUSINESS

RBI to expand UPI to 20 countries by 2028-29: Study

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Dinesh Karthik retires from all forms of competitive cricket

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SALAR
DIGITAL ENGLISH DAILY, BENGALURU

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EXIT POLLS 2024

TOTAL SEATS: 543
KARNATAKA: 28

	NDA	INDIA	OTH	KARNATAKA	
				NDA	INDIA
India Today-Axis My India	361-401	131-166	8-20	23-25	3-5
Today's Chanakya	385-415	96-118	27-45	24	4
C Voter	353-383	152-182	4-12	23-25	3-5
Times Now	358	132	53	23-26	3-7
Jan Ki Baat	362-392	141-161	10-20	21-23	5-7
Polstrat	346	162	35	20	8
Matrize	353-368	118-133	43-48	21	7
PMARQ	359	154	30	22	6

INDIA holds its breath as exit polls predict NDA win

Exit polls claim BJP will make big gains in K'taka, Bengal

Exit polls typically have low sample size and hence don't get numbers right. I, therefore, don't have faith in exit polls
-DK Shivakumar,
Deputy Chief Minister

I have full faith that the voters of India will make the BJP win more than 370 seats and the NDA win more than 400 seats under the leadership of Prime Minister Narendra Modi
-JP Nadda,
BJP Chief

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Several exit polls on Saturday predicted that Prime Minister Narendra Modi will retain power for a third straight term, with the BJP-led NDA expected to win a big majority in the Lok Sabha polls.

The ruling alliance in all likelihood will open its account in Tamil Nadu and Kerala and sweep Karnataka but may see a fall in its tally in states such as Bihar, Rajasthan and Haryana, according to these pollsters.

The Republic TV-P Marq poll claimed that the ruling alliance will win up to 359 seats and the opposition INDIA bloc will bag 154 seats in the 543-member Lok Sabha. The Republic TV-Matrize poll gave 353-368 seats to the NDA and 118-133 seats to the Opposition.

The Jan Ki Baat poll gave 362-392 seats to the ruling NDA and 141-161 to the Opposition alliance. The India TV-CNX gave them 371-401 and 109-139 seats respectively, while the corresponding tally predicted by News Nation was 342-378 and 153-169. A few other exit polls, including those from Axis My India and Today's Chanakya, were yet to forecast the full results by 8.40 pm In the 2019 polls, the BJP won 303 seats, while the NDA tally was 353.

In 2019, BJP won 303 seats and Congress 53 **PHOTO: PTI**

The Congress had bagged 53 seats and its allies 38. The 'INDIA' bloc was formed by opposition parties to take on the BJP in the Lok Sabha elections.

News 18 predicted that the BJP on its own will get 306-315 seats while its alliance will bag 355-370 seats. It gave 125-140 seats to INDIA.

After the seventh and last phase of voting ended on Saturday, Modi exuded confidence that people have voted in record numbers to re-elect the NDA government and said the "opportunistic INDI Alliance" failed to strike a chord with the voters who rejected their "regressive politics".Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge told reporters after a meeting of the opposition INDIA bloc that the alliance will win more than 295 seats.

Congress, however, claimed that the exit polls had been "orchestrated" by PM Modi and said these are all psychological games he is masterminding, but the actual results will be very different.

The counting of votes will take place on 4 June. —*PTI*

Polls end with 59% turnout as WB sees violence again

Voters wait in a queue at the world's highest polling station, at Tashigang, in Himachal's Lahaul & Spiti on Saturday; Angry voters throw EVMs in a pond, at Kultali in Bengal's South 24 Parganas **PHOTO: PTI**

NEW DELHI/ KOLKATA, 1 JUNE

An approximate voter turnout of 59.91 per cent was recorded on Saturday in the seventh and final phase of the Lok Sabha polls with incidents of violence between TMC and BJP supporters reported in Sandeshkhali region of West Bengal, and complaints of EVM glitches and rigging at some booths lodged.

Polling was conducted in seven states and the Union Territory of Chandigarh for 57 constituencies, including Varanasi in Uttar Pradesh from where Prime Minister Narendra Modi is seeking a third consecutive term in the Lok Sabha. Voting was held amid a severe heatwave in all 13 seats of Punjab and four of Himachal Pradesh, 13 constituencies in Uttar Pradesh, nine in West Bengal, eight in Bihar, six in Odisha and three in Jharkhand, besides Chandigarh. Polling for the remaining 42 assembly constituencies in Odisha and bypolls to six assembly seats in Himachal Pradesh also took place simultaneously.

Saturday's voting marked the end of the marathon polling process that began on 19 April. A voter turnout of nearly 70.01 per cent was recorded in Jharkhand, the highest. Uttar Pradesh logged a polling percentage of 55.60 per cent, while

Bihar was saw the lowest turnout at 51.47 per cent. After polling ended on Saturday, the EC thanked the Indian voters, saying it was "deeply humbled" by them making it to polling stations overcoming many challenges and dilemmas.

Violence in Bengal

Widespread violence between TMC and BJP supporters over alleged electoral malpractices was reported during polling in strife-torn Sandeshkhali region of Basirhat Lok Sabha constituency on Saturday, resulting in numerous injuries. Police resorted to lathicharge and tear gas shelling to control the situation.

Although the poll panel claimed that voting has been peaceful so far, it said it has received 1,899 complaints until 2pm from different political parties alleging EVM malfunctions and agents being stopped from entering booths.

Angry voters of Kultuli within Joynagar constituency dumped electronic voting machines (EVMs) and Voter Verified Paper Audit Trail (VV-PAT) machines into nearby waterbodies alleging electoral misconduct.

In Sandeshkhali, clashes broke out between TMC and BJP supporters over allegations of electoral malpractices. BJP candidate Rekha Patra alleged that TMC goons stopped voters from casting their votes. As both the groups came to blows on Basanti express highway, police resorted to baton charge and tear gas shelling to disperse the mob.

Basirhat SP Hossain Mehedi Rahaman said three people were injured during the clash between TMC and BJP supporters at Bayramari in Sandeshkhali, adding that one was arrested in this connection. BJP candidate Abhijit Das accused TMC of malpractices, which the TMC denied. As Das approached a polling booth, TMC activists staged protests and shouted "Go back" slogans. In Baranagar assembly seat, where a by-poll is on, CPI (M) candidate Tanmay Bhattacharya was allegedly physically assaulted when he was standing outside a booth as TMC workers accused him of trying to influence the voters. CPI (M)'s state secretariat member Samik Lahiri said that the party lodged complaints with the EC alleging "mass scale rigging" in Diamond Harbour constituency. —*PTI*

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56 dead due to heat stroke: Health Ministry

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

India has recorded 56 deaths from 24,849 suspected cases of heat stroke between March and May, according to data by the Union Health Ministry. Four security personnel deployed for the Lok Sabha elections died due to heatstroke over the last one week in Bihar's Rohtas district.

According to the data compiled by the National Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), 46 of these deaths were recorded in May alone (till 30 May).

Between 1 and 30 May, 19,189 suspected heat stroke cases were reported in the country, it said. The data does not include deaths from Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi and the final numbers are expected to be higher, a source said.

India on Friday alone reported at least 40 suspected heat-related deaths, 25 of them of staff deployed on Lok Sabha poll duty in Uttar Pradesh and Bihar.

"Reports on heat stroke deaths are being awaited from states such as Uttar Pradesh, Bihar and Delhi. Some states have reported issues in data entry. The data visible may not be final submission from states. So the numbers are expected to be higher than this," an official source said. According to National Centre for Disease Control, the cause of death should be certified as heat stroke or hyperthermia where the measured antemortem body temperature at the time of collapse was more than or equal to 40.6 degrees Celsius. 'Autopsy Findings in Heat Related Deaths', a set of guidelines released by the NCDC in March, defined heat-related death as a death in which exposure to high ambient temperature either caused the loss of life or significantly contributed to it. —*PTI*

CAMPAIGN ENDS FOR 6 KARNATAKA COUNCIL SEATS

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

Campaigning for the elections to the six Karnataka legislative council seats comprising three each of graduates and teachers' constituencies ended on Saturday. The polling will be held on 3 June. The counting of votes will take place on 6 June. The polls will be held for the constituencies of Karnataka North East Graduates, Karnataka South West Graduates, Bangalore Graduates, Karnataka South-East Teachers, Karnataka South-West Teachers and Karnataka South Teachers. These seats fell vacant following the retirement of the six sitting members. The graduates constituencies and teachers constituencies have 3.63 lakh and 70,260 voters respectively. —*PTI*

GOVT CLAIMS IN HC

POK is foreign territory, belongs to India: Pak

ISLAMABAD, 1 JUNE

The Pakistani government has admitted before the Islamabad High Court that Pakistan-Occupied Kashmir (POK) is a foreign territory. The government has told the court that Pakistan has no jurisdiction over it. The court on Friday was hearing the abduction case of local Kashmiri poet and journalist Ahmed Farhad Shah filed by his wife. Pakistan claimed that Shah is under the police custody of Pakistan-occupied Kashmir (PoK) and cannot be presented because he is on "foreign land".

The PoK, under the occupation of Pakistan since 1947, is an integral part of India, which the Indian Minister of External Affairs S Jaishankar recently reiterated.

The Additional Attorney General said Kashmir is a foreign territory with its own constitution and its own courts, and judgements of Pakistani courts in POK appear as judgements of foreign courts.

Justice Mohsin Akhtar Kayani asked that if POK was a foreign territory, then how the Pakistani military and Pakistani Rangers enter the land. Justice Kayani criticised Pakistan's intelligence agencies for continuing the practice of forced abductions of people. Shah was kidnapped from his home in Rawalpindi by Pakistan's intelligence agencies on 15 May. Shah is also an activist for the rights of PoK and its people. He is known for his strong criticism of the establishment (army), which calls the shots in the Islamic Republic. He had led and participated in several anti-government protests in POK in the past.

PHOTO: PTI

- There two cases registered against Farhad in Muzaffarabad and Dhirkot in PoK.

There at least two legal cases registered against Farhad in Muzaffarabad and Dhirkot in PoK. —*Salar News*

SAMIR MODI ALLEGES MOM PLANNED ASSAULT DURING GODFREY PHILLIPS BOARD MEETING

Samir Modi, an executive director of cigarette maker Godfrey Phillips India, has alleged his mother Bina Modi of orchestrating a physical assault on him during a company's board meeting earlier this week. Sameer Modi, in a complaint filed before the Delhi Police, has alleged that he was stopped from participating in the board meeting of Godfrey Phillips India (GPI) on 30 May by his Bina's PSO (security personnel) and was "grievously injured" after being assaulted. He has requested the police to take immediate legal action in the matter. He also claimed that the CCTV footage of the assault is available and it should be seized immediately before it is destroyed. Samir has alleged that his index finger has been fractured. The KK Modi family members are currently logged in a legal battle over the Rs 11,000-crore empire. —*PTI*

41 TREE FALLING PLAINTS

Rain leads to waterlogging & traffic jams in B'luru

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

Saturday saw welcome relief from the scorching heat as rain lashed Bengaluru, but the downpours also led to waterlogging, traffic disruptions, and fallen trees.

The downpour caused significant traffic congestion across the City, with waterlogging reported near RGA Tech Park on Sarjapur Road and flooding of homes in Ramakrishna Nagar and Yelachanahalli surroundings.

The rains also led to several trees and branches falling, with Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) forest wing receiving 41 complaints. However, they were just able to attend to four fallen trees and 18 fallen branches.

The rain began in the afternoon and intensified in the evening, causing inconvenience for commuters in many areas including Cantonment, Malleswaram, Sadashi vanagar, Seshadripuram, Vasanth Nagar, Bellandur, Krishnaraja puram, Banaswadi, and Koramangala. While some areas experienced heavy showers, others saw drizzle or no rain at all.

While the central and eastern parts of the city received heavy showers, areas like Shivajinagar, CV Raman Nagar, Mahadevapura, and Koramangala experienced drizzling with moderate rain. Meanwhile, Bommasandra, Electronic City, Arekere, Begur, Gottigere, Hulimavu, and the KIAL Airport area reported no rain at the time of reporting. The Bengaluru Traffic Police issued advisories for several roads due to waterlogging and fallen tree branches. A 4m-long traffic jam was seen on Bengaluru-Hosur National Highway due to construction work and heavy rains.

Waterlogging in Bengaluru's Banashankari on Saturday **PHOTO: SALAR**

Traffic congestion was also reported in Veerasandra junction, Hunsmaranahalli, Rainbow junction, Windsor Manor junction, Queens Road, Chakravarthy Layout, Marathahalli, BEL Circle, Rajapalay Hoodi, under Selam railway bridge on ORR Road, Hoodi, Goraguntepalya and Hosur Road. —*PTI*

Priests clash over temple ritual, 3 seriously injured

C'NAGAR, 1 JUNE

A clash broke out between priests over worship and initiation at the Chikkallur Temple in Kollegala taluk, a renowned pilgrimage site. The clash left three priest—Shankarappa, 65; Sivakumar Swamy, 40; and Nanjunda Swamy, 32. They have been hospitalised. The incident occurred when hundreds of devotees had gathered at the temple for the initiation ceremony of Lord Siddappaji. As one group was preparing for the initiation outside the temple, another group intervened, asserting their right to perform the initiation. This led to a confrontation between the factions led by Nanjunda and Shankarappa. During the scuffle, canes and tridents were used as weapons. One person suffered injury to the thigh bone, two others sustained head injuries. *—Salar News*

Lorry runs over toll operator in Nelamangala

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

In Arishinakunte, Nelamangala taluk of Bangalore Rural district, a toll operator, Nagaraj,25, working at Navayuga toll plaza, tragically lost his life while performing his duties. The incident occurred during his night shift on 31 May. Nagaraj attempted to stop a lorry that was trying to pass through the toll gate without paying the toll fee. In a turn of events, a canter approaching from behind carelessly rammed into the lorry, hitting Nagaraj in the process. The canter driver fled the scene immediately after the collision. Nagaraj succumbed to his injuries on the spot. Authorities are investigating the incident, and efforts are being made to apprehend the canter driver responsible for the fatal accident. *—Salar News*

Cops arrest parents after woman dies post illegal abortion

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

The City police arrested the parents of a pregnant woman following an illegal abortion in Mahalingpur town, Bagalkot district, on Saturday. Sonali, 33, a resident of Sangli in Maharashtra, underwent an abortion at a home in Mahalingpur after she found out that it was a female foetus. She already had two daughters. She died on 27 May. To carry out the abortion, Sonali traveled to Mahalingpur town in Karnataka. She paid Rs 40,000 to Kavitha Baddannavar, a nurse operating outside legal and ethical boundaries, to perform the procedure at a private home. Following Sonali's death, Maharashtra Police arrested seven individuals, including the nurse, Kavitha Baddannavar. *—Salar News*

PHOTO: SALAR

Kolar cops give 2 youths haircut for teasing girls

KOLAR, 1 JUNE

Two youths, Raju and Kiran, were apprehended by the Kolar police for allegedly eve teasing near schools and colleges, and were forced to trim their long hair as punishment. The police took action due to their unusual hairstyles and loitering around educational institutions.' According to Police Sub Inspector (PSI) Arjun of Nangali, the youths were spotted near schools with long and peculiar hairstyles. They were brought to the police station, where a hairdresser was called in to trim their hair. Both were issued a stern warning against sporting bizarre hairstyles and lingering around schools without reason before being released. PSI Arjun further stated that one of the youths, Kiran, was seen riding a motorbike near educational institutions, while Raju was found walking around aimlessly. *—Salar News*

Defamation case: CM, DyCM get bail; RaGa summoned

BJP sued Congress over its '40 per cent Sarkara' campaign

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

A court on Saturday directed Congress leader Rahul Gandhi to appear before it in a defamation case filed by BJP, and granted bail to Karnataka Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar.

Rahul was asked to appear before the court on 7 June.

The defamation case on alleged false advertisements was filed by BJP General Secretary Keshav Prasad.

While Siddaramaiah and Shivakumar appeared in person before the Special Court for People's Representatives in Bengaluru, Gandhi, who was supposed to appear, did not turn up.

BJP advocates raised objections and said Gandhi should not be given an exemption under CrPC 205 since he had skipped an appearance for the second time.

Congress advocates argued that Gandhi was attending the INDIA bloc meeting in New Delhi, and he is also a contestant in the Lok Sabha polls.

CM Siddaramaiah and Deputy CM DK Shivakumar **PHOTO: SALAR**

They requested the court for exemption from Saturday's hearing and promised that the Congress leader would be present on the next date.

In the run-up to the 2023 Assembly election, Congress ran a campaign of '40 per cent Sarkara', accusing the then BJP government of collecting 40 per cent commission on public works and exorbitant bribe in posting and recruitments. The party also put out posters of 'PayCM' with a QR code showing the then chief minister Basavaraj Bommai in the middle of it. Scanning the QR code would redirect to a web page developed by the Congress which had contents accusing rampant corruption prevailing in the state under the BJP rule.

The complainant accused the Congress party of running a defamatory campaign against the previous BJP government.

Speaking to reporters, Siddaramaiah said he appeared in court regarding a private complaint. He described the case as civil and emphasised his commitment to the law.

The chief minister said KPCC president Shivakumar and Rahul Gandhi were also implicated in the case. All the three leaders have requested a permanent injunction to avoid further court appearances related to this case.

Meanwhile, addressing mediapersons, Shivakumar said the Congress' advertisements were based on statements made by BJP leaders, which were reported in the media.

He asserted that the party is prepared to handle the legal challenge, noting the BJP leaders' claims about substantial payments for the chief minister's post and other positions. *—PTI*

SEX SCANDAL CASE

Break silence, assure justice: Cong to PM on Prajwal's arrest

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

- All India Mahila Congress President Alka Lamba said letting a "mass rapist" escape is "Modi ki Guarantee

With sexual-abuse accused Prajwal Revanna's arrest, Congress on Saturday questioned Prime Minister Narendra Modi's "silence" on the matter and claimed that he has "failed" to provide justice to women in the last 10 years.

Suspended JD (S) MP Revanna, facing sexual-abuse allegations, was remanded in police custody on Friday, hours after he was arrested by a Bengaluru Police team on his return from Germany.

Hitting out at Modi for "allowing" Revanna to flee in the first place, All India Mahila Congress President Alka Lamba said letting a "mass rapist" escape is "Modi ki Guarantee".

"Narendra Modi kept raising the 'Beti Bachao' slogan, but did not break his silence on Prajwal Revanna," she told a press conference at All India Congress Committee (AICC) headquarters.

She said the possibility of pressure being put on victims and witnesses still exists and "we urge Modi to break his silence and assure that there would be no tampering with evidence and justice will be ensured to our daughters".

"It is unfortunate that in the last 10 years, Narendra Modi has failed to provide justice to our daughters," Lamba alleged.

In the first case registered against him at the Holenarasipura Town police station in Hassan on 28 April, Prajwal has been accused of sexually harassing a 47-year-old former maid. He is listed as the accused number two in the case, while his father and local MLA HD Revanna is the primary accused.

Prajwal has so far been booked in three cases of sexual assault. There are also charges of rape against him.

Modi had asserted last month that there should be zero tolerance for someone like Prajwal and accused Congress government in Karnataka of allowing the JD(S) MP to go out of the country and releasing the incriminating sex videos after the polls were over in region dominated by Vokkaligas. *—PTI*

Bhavani Revanna keeps SIT sleuths waiting

HASSAN, 1 JUNE

Special Investigation Team (SIT) on Saturday said it could not interrogate Bhavani Revanna, mother of suspended JD(S) leader Prajwal Revanna, in a kidnap case as she was not present at her residence. The SIT had issued a notice to Bhavani on Thursday asking her to be present at home from 10 am to 5pm on 1 June as there was a need to question her in the case. When a team of SIT sleuths reached Bhavani's house, 'Chennambika Nilaya', today she was not present. Though the officers decided to wait till evening, she failed to turn up. *—PTI*

Mysuru DC mandates water test before supply

MYSURU, 1 JUNE

District Election Officer KV Rajendra has emphasised the importance of regular water testing before supplying drinking water to the public, stressing its significance for public health. In a video conference held at the Zilla Panchayat Hall, Rajendra addressed the issue of drinking water quality control and the system being used in urban local bodies.

Rajendra asked to ensure a proper drainage system for smooth water flow around sources like tube wells and necessary steps should be taken to build a concrete dam around the water source.

He issued a stern warning saying, "If drinking water is supplied without being tested and it effects health of the public, the head of the concerned urban local body will be held responsible. The concerned authorities should supervise the cleanliness and maintenance of drains in the villages. Strict instructions should be given to provide clean drinking water."

Rajendra also highlighted the need for vigilance to prevent the spread of dengue and chikungunya in the district. "Officials of various departments should coordinate their work. All the pipelines should be monitored daily. If the pipeline is damaged, there is a possibility that contaminated water will be added to the drinking water."

He also stressed the urgency of repairing broken drinking water supply pipelines to prevent contamination. The water quality of the overhead tanks constructed to supply drinking water under various schemes of the government should be tested."

Adding to the discussion, Zilla Panchayat Chief Executive Officer KM Gayatri said, "It is the responsibility of the officials to provide clean water and a clean environment." *—Salar News*

DRY DAYS AHEAD

People seen outside Tonique, one of the largest liquor outlets in India, on MG Road, Bengaluru on Saturday. Due to election counting and MLC polls, bars and pubs will be closed till 4 June evening **PHOTO: SALAR**

Govt won't protect Minister in money transfer case: CM

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

Chief Minister Siddaramaiah and his Deputy DK Shivakumar on Saturday asserted that the State government will not protect anyone in the illegal money transfer case involving Karnataka Maharshi Valmiki Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation Ltd.

The assertion comes hours after Opposition BJP sought a CBI probe into the illegal money transfer case and demanded that Minister of Scheduled Tribes Welfare B Nagendra be dismissed.

Siddaramaiah was responding to a question on a case involving Minister

Nagendra and BJP seeking his removal.

The illegal transfer of money came to light after the Accounts Superintendent at the Corporation, Chandrashekhar P, died by suicide on 26 May, leaving behind a death note.

It revealed the unauthorised transfer of Rs 187 crore belonging to the corporation from its bank account, and from that, Rs 88.62 crore was illegally moved to various accounts allegedly belonging to "well-known" IT companies and a Hyderabad-based cooperative bank. Chandrashekhar has named the Corporation's now suspended Managing Director JG Padmanabh, accounts officer Parashuram G Durugannavar, and Union Bank of India Chief Manager Suchismita Rawal in the note, while also stating that the "Minister" had issued oral orders for transferring the funds.

The government has constituted a four-member SIT team to conduct the probe. *—PTI*

> **BJP is doing politics, I won't question them. During BJP regime too such things have happened. Basavaraj Bommai (former CM) is aware of it**
>
> -DK Shivakumar, Deputy Chief Minister

Members of Wake Up Karnataka KL Ashok, N Venkatesh, Tara Rao, LN Mukundaraj, BT Lalitha Nayak, Ennegere Venkataramiah, Fr Manohar Chandra Prasad, Ejaz Ahmed Bukhari **PHOTO: SALAR**

Helpline launched to report malpractice on counting day

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

Civil society groups, people's movements and community organisations have launched a helpline to report any malpractices near the counting station on 4 June to "protect voter rights".

Counting Watch, the helpline launched on Saturday, is aimed to tackle the malpractice and protect the voters' right. The helpline will be available from 7am to 12pm on Tuesday.

Lokesh Naik, a member of Wake up Karnataka (civil society group), said citizens in North India can report malpractices near the booths to 9870419280, 7982597191, whereas people in South can dial 9741482975 and 6366705015. "Our 'Vigilant Voters Task Force' will reach the polling station and take legal actions," he said.

HELPLINE NUMBERS

North India: 9870419280, 7982597191

South India: 9741482975, 6366705015

(Including Goa & Maharashtra)

The Task Force consists of journalists, civil society members, Opposition leaders and legal advisors, K Governing Council member of Wake up Karnataka, L Ashok, told **Salar News**. In addition to ensure justice on the counting day, the organisations have sent a letter to President Droupadi Murmu, Chief Justice of India DY Chandrachud and other judges. *—Salar News*

No animal sacrifice in Kerala temple: DKS

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

Deputy Chief Minister DK Shivakumar on Saturday clarified that a ritual named "Shatru Bhairavi Yaga", which involves the sacrifice of animals, was not performed at the Rajarajeshwara temple in Kerala, but in a private place nearby.

Meanwhile, Kerala reiterated that no animal sacrifice was held near a temple in the northern part of the state, as claimed by Shivakumar.

Shivakumar on Thursday claimed that the "Shatru Bhairavi Yaga" was being performed targeting him, Chief Minister Siddaramaiah, and Congress, nearRajarajeshwara temple in Kerala. He, without revealing any names, alleged that some political people in the State were getting it done, and Aghoris (monastic order of ascetic Shaivite sadhus) are being consulted for it. Asked about the exact place, he said, "I don't want to disclose. A priest who was part of that (ritual), has given me some information.""I have respect for all the Kerala temples, it is God's Own Country. Some have misunderstood. I don't want to hurt the sentiments of anyone in Kerala or anywhere in the country," he added.He welcomed the Kerala government's decision to conduct an inquiry into the incident, *—Salar News*

CET results announced, City students bag top 10 positions

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

- Of the 3.49 lakh candidates, 3.10 lakh have cleared the exam. Of which 1.39 lakh candidates are boys and 1.71 lakh candidates are girls

Students from schools in Bengaluru grabbed the top 10 positions in engineering in Common Entrance Test (CET) 2024 whose results were announced on Saturday.

Karnataka Examinations Authority conducted the CET across 737 examination centres in the State on 18 and 19 April.

Harsha Karthikeya Vutukuri from Narayana Olympiad School, Bengaluru, topped engineering and Nihaar SR from Expert PU College, Mangaluru, came first in Naturopathy & Yogic Science, and Agriculture.

In Veterinary, B Pharma, Pharm D and Nursing, Kalyan V from Sri Chaitanya Techno School, Bengaluru, was the topper in all of the three.

The toppers in engineering are Harsha Karthikeya Vutukuri from Narayana Olympiad School; Manoj Sohan Gajula from Sri Chaitanya Techno School; Abhinav PJ from Nehru Smaraka Vidyalaya; Sana Tabassum from Narayana PU College and Animesh Singh Rathore from Sri Chaitanya Techno School; all based out of Bengaluru. Of the 3.49 lakh candidates, 3.10 lakh have cleared the exam. Of which 1.39 lakh candidates are boys and 1.71 lakh candidates are girls.

Following the controversy and the complaints on certain questions being outside the syllabus grace marks have been added for 9 questions from Physics, 15 from Chemistry, 15 from Mathematics, and 11 from Biology. Out of 50 toppers in all five courses 40 of them are from the city. —Salar News

ON 8 JUNE

Visthar to host 16th Bhoomi Habba

BENGALURU, 1 JUNE

The 16th edition of Bhoomi Habba is set to return on 8 June, at Visthar's campus in Bengaluru. Bhoomi Habba is an annual event organised by Visthar, which is a secular Civil Society Organisation.

The event is a celebration dedicated to environmental consciousness and fostering sustainable alternatives.

This year's Bhoomi Habba will focus on the critical issue of water scarcity in the City.

"Bhoomi Habba serves as a catalyst for positive change," says Mercy Kappen, Executive Director of Visthar.

"It's a space where everyone can come together, share ideas, and discover ways to contribute to a sustainable future." From upcycling workshops to discovering organic produce and enjoying art that celebrates nature, the festival inspires individuals to become active participants in finding eco-friendly solutions, she added.

The event is a celebration dedicated to environmental consciousness and fostering sustainable alternatives **PHOTO: SALAR**

According to a press release by Visthar, this year's theme highlights the severe water shortage in Bengaluru, where the City grapples with a daily deficit of approximately 500 million litres.

Bhoomi Habba aims to spark conversations on innovative water conservation and management strategies. Through interactive exhibits, workshops, and panel discussions, participants can engage with experts and community leaders to learn about rainwater harvesting, wastewater recycling, and adopting water-efficient technologies.

The event boasts a diverse range of activities, including folk dance performances by the Timbuktu Theatre Troupe, electrifying Djembe beats by the Indian Folk Band, film screenings on environmental issues, and thought-provoking theatre plays.

It began as part of an international peace programme and later transformed into a celebration of ecological well-being and eco-justice.

Visitors can expect a day filled with environmental campaigns, exhibitions showcasing sustainable practices, art workshops, theatre and dance performances, storytelling sessions. *—Salar News*

EVENT DETAILS

- **Date:** 8 June
- **Time:** 10am – 7pm
- **Entry Fee:** ₹50
- The stall charge is ₹5,000 (inclusive of 18% GST)
- **Venue:** Visthar, KRC Road, Dodda Gubbi, Kothanur Post, Bengaluru 560-077
- Website: www.visthar.org

VOTERS BOYCOTT; VIOLENCE MARS POLLS

There were allegations of rigging too

Voters leave on a ropeway after casting their votes in Kullu district, on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

HIMACHAL PRADESH

Even at world's highest polling station, citizens rebel & refuse to vote

Prem Lal arrived early at the sub-divisional magistrate's office on Thursday, the icy cold and crisp morning air hinting at the challenges ahead.

As one of the 29 booth-level officers deployed from Kaza to polling stations in Lahaul-Spiti district of Himachal Pradesh, Lal knew that the next few days would be demanding.

Tashigang is a tiny village perched high in the icy Himalayas at a staggering altitude of 15,256 feet. The village holds the distinction of hosting the highest polling station in the world.

The polling station at Tashigang, serving 62 voters from Tashigang and Gete, has been made a model polling booth.

A pink-and-white tent has been pitched on one side of the polling station as a sitting area for the voters.

Demanding basic facilities like road and internet connection, the residents of twin villages of Makhan and Chachul in Churah subdivision of Himachal Pradesh's Chamba district boycotted Lok Sabha elections.

Voter turnout 68.48%

The villagers, including men and women, gathered in huge numbers outside polling booth No. 25 in Makhan village but refused to vote.

ODISHA

Violence, death and suspension of official

BJP's Salipur candidate Arindam Ray alleged that elections were rigged by BJD workers in some of the booths in the area and the Mahanga assembly segments.

The presiding officer of a polling booth in the Niali Assembly under the Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha seat was suspended for "dereliction of election duty".The officer concerned was placed under "suspension after he was found guilty of acting in a partisan manner and trying to influence voters during polling". Two people were injured in separate clashes outside a polling booth in Gop area in the Jagatsinghpur Lok Sabha seat and Salipur under the Kendrapara parliamentary constituency.

A polling official, identified as Manoranjan Sahoo, in Jajpur district complained of uneasiness and was taken to a local hospital where he was declared dead, another official said. An elderly man fell sick while standing in a queue outside a booth in Iswarpur in Nilagiri Assembly segment in Balasore, and he was taken to a hospital, where doctors declared him dead. *—PTI*

Voter turnout 65.91%

UTTAR PRADESH

Villagers boycott polls, some allege rigging, heatwave kills one

In a series of posts tagging Election Commission on 'X', Samajwadi Party alleged slow voting at a booth under the Chandauli Lok Sabha segment and accused the presiding officer at a booth in Ballia Lok Sabha constituency's Bairia and BJP booth agents of rigging.

Voters in Ballia's Math Dhajju Giri village boycotted the polls over their demand for road connectivity and electricity supply. Local SHO Dharamveer Singh said there are about 900 voters in the village.

SP also alleged that CCTV cameras had been switched off by the administration at booths 430 and 431 in the Chanbe assembly segment under Mirzapur Lok Sabha constituency.

In Rasulpur village of Ballia, several voters boycotted the Lok Sabha polls and raised their demand for an underpass, saying they were facing great difficulties in its absence.

A 70-year-old man died at a polling booth here on Saturday, an official said.

Voter turnout 55.60%

Sikandarpur Sub-divisional Magistrate Ravi Kumar said Rambachan Chauhan, 70, a resident of Chak Bahuddin village, had gone to vote at booth number 257 of the village's primary school under Salempur Lok Sabha constituency. Before joining the queue of voters, he suddenly fell unconscious and died, he added. In Maharajganj district, voters were given a sapling each at the polling centre set up at a primary school in Nagar Panchayat Chowk. *—PTI*

WEST BENGAL

Bombs, lathicharge & intimidation of party workers

The riverine area has been on the boil since Friday night in Bermajur area as BJP made allegations that TMC workers, accompanied by policemen, intimidated its polling agents by visiting their homes on Friday night.

A confrontation erupted in Bhangar within Jadavpur constituency between backers of TMC and the Indian Secular Front, with allegations of crude bombs being hurled from both sides. Police intervention ensued, triggering protests as both factions accused each other.

To quell the situation, security personnel resorted to lathicharge to disperse the mob, recovering several crude bombs. In Jadavpur area's Ganguly Bagan, CPI(M) workers were allegedly beaten by TMC activists and their camp offices were ransacked. TMC, however, denied the allegations. In Baranagar Assembly, where a byelection is also being held simultaneously, CPI(M) candidate Tanmay Bhattacharya scuffled with local TMC leaders at a booth in BKC College. Police officials intervened and separated them. CPI(M) accused ruling TMC workers of intimidating its polling agents and other electoral malpractices in different constituencies during the seventh phase of Lok Sabha elections being held in nine seats.

CPI(M)'s state secretariat member Samik Lahiri said that the party lodged complaints with the Election Commission alleging "mass scale rigging" in Diamond Harbour. *—PTI*

Voter turnout 69.89%

JHARKHAND

Over 400 villagers boycott voting in Dumka

Voter turnout 70.01%

A total of 426 people in a village in Dumka district boycotted voting in the seventh and final phase of Lok Sabha polls to protest against the construction of a coal dumping yard, an official said. "Out of 430 voters enrolled in the booth, only four electors have exercised their franchise till 3 pm," Dumka Circle Officer Amar Kumar told PTI.

He said the villagers have been protesting against the construction of the Railways' coal dumping yard. Sub-divisional Officer Ajay Kumar held a meeting with the villagers and assured them of raising the issue with higher authorities. However, they did not agree to vote.

A representative of the village, Lakshman Soren, told PTI, "We made it clear that if the SDO gives us an assurance in writing to stop the construction of the yard, we will go to cast our votes. But, we were not given any such assurance."

BJP candidate from Jharkhand's Dumka Lok Sabha seat, Sita Soren, alleged irregularities in the voting process and demanded re-polling in the constituency. Sita, the sister-in-law of jailed former chief minister Hemant Soren, claimed that the voting process was being intentionally delayed.

Ansari, from Badkhori village in Rajmahal parliamentary constituency, voted at booth number 10 of the Upgraded Government Middle School in Mandro, the official added. Ansari's name was missing from the electoral rolls in his entire life, a fact discovered by Jharkhand Chief Electoral Officer K Ravi Kumar during inspections of Mandro polling stations on 5 April.

Voters cross Ganga by boat in Diara area of Sahibganj, Jharkhand

BIHAR

85 detained for clashes; Son votes 1st, then cremates mother

A total of 85 people were either arrested or detained in connection with the clashes, an officer of Bihar Police said. A few stray incidents of clashes among supporters of different political parties were reported in Bhojpur, Kaimur and Jehanabad, but those did not impact the polling process, the officials said.

Voter turnout 51.47%

Family members of an eighty-year-old Bihar woman, who died on Saturday, preferred to first cast their vote and then perform her last rites.

The incident occurred during at Devkuli village in Jehanabad. "My mother died today. She will not come back. Cremation can wait, but not the election. Therefore, we discussed the matter and decided to perform the last rites of our mother after casting our votes," Mithilesh Yadav, son of the deceased, told reporters. Two polling officials being treated at a government hospital after they fainted due to heatwave. *—PTI*

Two polling officials being treated at a government hospital after they fainted due to heatwave on Saturday *PHOTO: PTI*

AND IT'S DONE...

RJD chief Lalu Prasad Yadav with wife Rabri Devi and daughter Rohini Acharya after casting their vote on Saturday in Patna; Polling officials seal an EVM at a polling booth after the conclusion of the poll; TMC Asansol candidate Shatrughan Sinha in Patna; BJP Chief JP Nadda in Bilaspur district, Chhattisgarh *PHOTO: PTI*

Approx voter turnout till 10 pm; Source: ECI/PTI/ANI

PUNJAB

BSP candidate booked for recording video while casting vote

BSP candidate for Ferozepur Lok Sabha seat Surinder Kamboj has been booked for allegedly getting his video recorded while casting his vote and making it public, officials said on Saturday. Kamboj was filmed by an unidentified person while casting his vote at a polling station in Guruharsahai's Jiva Rai village.

Ferozepur Deputy Commissioner Rajesh Dhiman said Kamboj made the video public. A case has been registered against Kamboj and an unidentified person under relevant sections of the Representation of People's Act, 1951 and the Indian Penal Code.

Punjab's cultural heritage was on display on Saturday across the state at many polling stations where the voters had a glimpse of old utensils, 'phulkari pakhi', traditional 'atta chakki', 'charkha' and old musical instruments.

Several model and unique polling stations were set up in the state where polling for 13 Lok Sabha seats were taking place. One such polling station was set up at a school in Patiala. According to an official, this polling booth was dedicated to Punjab's rich culture and heritage.

AAP MLA Neena Mittal was issued a notice for allegedly making a video of her casting vote at a polling booth in Rajpura. The officials said BSP's Ferozepur candidate Surinder Kamboj was booked for having someone film him while voting at a polling booth in Guruharsahai, and making the video public. In Muktsar, an EVM developed a technical snag at a polling booth in Khuddian village.

Voter turnout 55.98%

CHANDIGARH

EC failed to take measures against heatwave: Voters

The Union Territory of Chandigarh witnessed peaceful polling. However, voters complained about inadequate measures by the Election Commission in booths to beat the blazing heat.

Voter turnout 67.90%

Voters in booth 409 stood in long queues in the scorching sun with no arrangement of shade as the mercury soared over 44 degrees Celsius. The angry people returned at 8:15 am without casting their votes. There are a total of 6.5 lakh voters in this seat.

Out of these, 3,4 lakh are male, 3.18 lakh female and 35 third gender voters.

The number of first-time voters is 17,977 and the number of handicapped voters is 3,816.

A total of 19 candidates are in the fray for this seat. The main contest is being said to be between Sanjay Tandon of BJP and Manish Tewari of INDIA. Congress candidate Manish Tewari will not be able to vote for himself because his vote falls in Ludhiana, Punjab.

Voters wait in queues at a polling booth to cast their votes; Bollywood actor Ayushman Khurana casts his vote in Chandigarh

PHOTO: PTI

AAP activist shot dead in Punjab's Ajnala

AMRITSAR, 1 JUNE

Two unidentified bike-borne assailants allegedly shot dead an AAP activist and left four others injured, police said on Saturday. The assailants fled from the spot at Lakhuwal village in Ajnala, police added. The incident took place on Friday night when a group of people were sitting outside a house, Ajnala police station Station House Officer (SHO) Balbir Singh said, adding two bike-borne assailants came suddenly and opened indiscriminate fire on the gathering. Four others were injured in the incident, the police official said. *—PTI*

IMD says Delhi temp reading due to sensor glitch

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The India Meteorological Department (IMD) on Saturday said the temperature reading of 52.9 degrees Celsius by an automatic weather station (AWS) at Mungeshpur in northwest Delhi was due to a "malfunctioning sensor" and said that such devices deployed for weather observations will be examined. The weather office had dispatched a team of experts to Mungeshpur after an AWS deployed there recorded a maximum temperature of 52.9 degrees Celsius on May 29 to examine the device for errors, if any. *—PTI*

INDIA will win over 295 seats: Kharge

INDIA leaders discussed post-result prep

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

INDIA bloc parties will get more than 295 seats in the Lok Sabha polls, Congress President Mallikarjun Kharge said on Saturday, asserting that they had arrived at the figure after feedback from people.

Addressing reporters here after a meeting of top leaders of the Opposition bloc at his residence here, Kharge said the leaders of the alliance met for about two and a half hours and discussed a host of issues, especially the precautions to be taken on counting day and the instructions they have to give to their parties' workers.

Votes for the seven-phase general elections will be counted on 4 June.

Targeting BJP, he said, "They are trying to give a narrative through government exit polls and we want to tell the people the truth."

TMC Chief and West Bengal Chief Minister Mamata Banerjee had already said they would not attend the meeting as there were elections in the state. PDP chief Mehbooba Mufti did not attend the meeting due to personal reasons.

INDIA bloc parties have also given instructions to their workers about Form 17 C and not to get out of the counting hall till he or she gets the certificate of election, he said. *—PTI*

Rahul Gandhi, Sharad Pawar, Bhagwant Mann, Tejashwi Yadav, Sonia Gandhi, Mallikarjun Kharge, Arvind Kejriwal in New Delhi PHOTO: PTI

INDIA to take part in exit poll debates

New Delhi, 1 June

INDIA bloc parties on Saturday announced that they will participate in the exit poll debates on television this evening after the grouping's top leaders met and deliberated on the issue at Congress president Mallikarjun Kharge's residence. It came a day after the Congress said it has decided not to participate in any Lok Sabha exit poll debates on television channels. The party does not want to indulge in speculation and slugfest for TRP, it had said.Congress's media head Pawan Khera said INDIA bloc parties met and decided to expose the BJP and its ecosystem on the prefixed exit polls. *—PTI*

ED opposes Kejriwal's interim bail plea

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

PHOTO: ANI

The Enforcement Directorate (ED) on Saturday opposed an application moved by Chief Minister Arvind Kejriwal before a court here seeking interim bail in a money laundering case related to the alleged Delhi excise policy scam.

The probe agency claimed before Special Judge Kaveri Baweja that Kejriwal has suppressed facts and made false statements, including about his health.

Solicitor General Tushar Mehta, appearing for the Enforcement Directorate, told the court that Kejriwal also made misleading claims at a press conference on Friday that he is going to surrender on 2 June.

The court was hearing an application moved by Kejriwal, the National Convenor of AAP, seeking interim bail for a week on health grounds.

The Chief Minister's counsel told the court that Kejriwal is ill and needs treatment.

The AAP leader was earlier granted interim bail by the Supreme Court and it ends on 1 June. Meanwhile, senior BJP leader Vijay Goel on Saturday sent an ambulance to take Kejriwal to hospital for medical tests after the AAP leader claimed he might be suffering from some serious ailments.

The police, however, stopped the ambulance and Goel en route to the chief minister's official residence in Civil Lines here.

Goel alleged that Kejriwal was "creating drama" by citing health issues to gain people's sympathy.

"This ambulance was to take Kejriwal to any hospital where all his tests can be done within two to four hours," he told reporters.

The former Union minister said the chief minister should stop "drama" and go with him for tests if he was concerned about his health.

The chief minister was earlier granted interim bail by the Supreme Court and it ends on 1 June. *—PTI*

RAJEEV: ISRAELI FIRM'S INTERFERENCE IN LS POLLS THREAT TO DEMOCRACY

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Union minister Rajeev Chandrasekhar said that the suspected interference in Lok Sabha elections by an Israeli firm as a "very dangerous threat" to democracy.

ChatGPT-maker OpenAI said in a report that it foiled disruptive activities by an Israeli firm that was spreading content against BJP and in favour of Congress during the elections.

The report named Israeli company as STOIC. The OpenAI said that the company conducted such work across platforms like X Facebook, Instagram, and other websites. On X, Chandrasekhar said it was clear that the BJP was the target of "influence operations, misinformation, and foreign interference". In a report published on Thursday, OpenAI said that it foiled five covert influence operations (IO) using artificial intelligence (AI)-generated content over the past three months. *—Salar News*

PM ends meditation, Oppn calls it media spectacle

KANYAKUMARI, 1 JUNE

Prime Minister Narendra Modi on Saturday concluded his 45-hour long meditation at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial here and paid floral tributes to Tamil saint poet Thiruvalluvar.

On conclusion of his dhyan session, Modi, clad in white, visited the 133-ft statue of Thiruvalluvar, located next to the rock memorial and placed a huge garland there marking his tribute. He arrived at the statue complex by a ferry service and later reached the shore using the service.

Trinamool Congress national general secretary Abhishek Banerjee Modi of turning his meditation session in Kanyakumari into a media spectacle funded by taxpayers' money.

Banerjee said meditation is a personal practice beneficial for body, mind, and soul but cautioned against making it a public show.

Meanwhile, Tamil Nadu BJP President K Annamalai said that the Opposition parties are doing politics without knowing what to do. *—PTI / ANI*

Prime Minister Narendra Modi at the Vivekananda Rock Memorial, in Kanyakumari on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

Toll mounts to eight in Puri cracker explosion

BHUBANESWAR, 1 JUNE

The death toll in the explosion of a stockpile of firecrackers in Odisha's Puri mounted to eight on Saturday after two more persons undergoing treatment succumbed to their injuries, a senior official said. At least 30 people were injured in the explosion that happened during Lord Jagannath's Chandan Jatra on Wednesday night. Among them, eight persons have died so far and 22 others are undergoing treatment in different hospitals in Puri, Bhubaneswar and Cuttack, the official of Special Relief Commissioner (SRC) office said. "Two more people succumbed to their injuries in hospitals, while 22 others are undergoing treatment," he said, adding a few more are in a critical condition. Chief Minister Naveen Patnaik has ordered an inquiry into the incident, and announced an ex-gratia amount of Rs 4 lakh each to the next of kin of the deceased. Additional Chief Secretary of the Revenue and Disaster Management Department, Satyabrata Sahu, has started a probe*—PTI*

Toll in Mizoram landslides rises to 29

AIZAWL, 1 JUNE

The death toll in landslides in Mizoram climbed to 29 after the body of a 34-year-old woman was found in Tlawng River in Kolasib district, officials said. The woman, identified as Vanlalruali, and her husband had been missing after being hit by a landslide in Aibawk village in Aizawl district on Tuesday. The woman's body was found in the river in Hortoki village in Kolasib district, which borders Assam, on Friday, they said. Her body was taken to Kawnpui after being fished out of the river and her family members confirmed her identity. Search for five other missing persons – four of whom are from Melthum, including a six-month-old, besides Vanlalruali's husband – is underway. The deaths were reported landslides in Aizawl. 21 were locals while eight were migrants from Jharkhand and Assam. *—PTI*

IndiGo derosters 6 over bomb scare on flight

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

IndiGo has derostered two pilots and four cabin crew members of the Delhi-Varanasi flight that saw 176 passengers being evacuated after a bomb threat earlier this week, according to sources.

On 28 May, following the bomb threat, which later turned out to be hoax, all the passengers were evacuated through emergency slides from the aircraft at the Delhi airport.

In a video clip of the evacuation that went viral on social media, a pilot was seen coming out of the aircraft through the emergency slide with a baggage. Under international norms, passengers and crew are not permitted to take their baggage at the time of evacuation as that will increase the time for evacuation.

The wet-leased aircraft was to operate the flight from the national capital to Varanasi on the morning of Tuesday.

One of the sources said the two pilots, who were from the lessor company, four IndiGo cabin crew members have been derostered. Generally, under the wet lease arrangement, crew, insurance and other things related to the aircraft are taken care of by the lessor. A source at the Directorate General of Civil Aviation confirmed that the crew have been derostered. Specific details regarding the derostering could not be ascertained. The review pertains to multiple things that are being investigated by the flight safety team. *—PTI*

A passenger being evacuated through the emergency door of the Delhi-Varanasi IndiGo flight that received a bomb threat PHOTO: PTI

4 Bishnoi gang members held for plot to kill Salman

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

The Navi Mumbai police infiltrated the social media groups, including WhatsApp, of the Lawrence Bishnoi gang before arresting four of its members for allegedly plotting to attack actor Salman Khan, an official said on Saturday.

The action comes months after the police made arrests in connection with a firing outside the actor's Bandra home in Mumbai.

Vivek Pansare, Deputy Commissioner of Police Zone II (Panvel), told the media that Panvel police station senior inspector Nitin Thackeray got inputs in September-October last year about a conspiracy to harm the actor

A few Navi Mumbai police officers and informers then infiltrated WhatsApp and other social media groups of the Bishnoi gang and began tracking the chatter on those platforms, he said.

The police said they learnt that the four arrested gang members had recced Salman's farmhouse in Panvel, the area around his home at Bandra in Mumbai and places he visited for film shooting.

Accused Dhananjay Tapesingh, alias Ajay Kashyap, 28, was arrested from Panvel on 28 April. The same day, Gaurav Bhatia, alias Sandeep Bishnoi, was taken into custody from Gujarat, the official said. While the third person Vaspi Khan, alias Waseem Chikna, was picked from Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar, Rizwan Khan, alias Javed Khan, was arrested from Bangalore, he said.` *—PTI*

Salman Khan; Lawrence Bishnoi PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA/PTI

TEEN'S MOTHER HELD IN PUNE CAR ACCIDENT

PUNE, 1 JUNE

Pune police have arrested the mother of the minor in the Porsche car accident case after confirmation that his blood samples were replaced with hers, the city police chief said on Saturday. She is likely to be produced in a court during the day.

As part of their probe, the police also spoke to the minor for about an hour at the observation home, where he has been sent till 5 June, in his mother's presence.

Citing their investigation into the accident, Commissioner of Police Amitesh Kumar said the juvenile's blood samples were swapped with those of his mother.

Police had told a local court two days ago that the blood samples of the 17-year-old juvenile were exchanged with those of a woman.

In the accident, two IT professionals were killed in the early hours of 19 May in Kalyani Nagar in Pune after a Porsche allegedly being driven by the minor, who the police claim was drunk, rammed into their two-wheeler. *—PTI*

RAIN FURY

Red alert issued in Kerala as Southwest monsoon intensifies

Intense rains caused severe waterlogging in Thrissur district PHOTO: PTI

T'PURAM, 1 JUNE

With Southwest monsoon intensifying in Kerala two days after its onset, heavy downpours lashed several parts of the state, especially in south and central districts triggering landslides, uprooting trees and waterlogging.

Continuous rains for hours caused widespread destruction in the high-range areas of Kottayam and Idukki districts, while intense rains caused severe waterlogging and traffic snarls in the low-lying areas of Thrissur district.

The India Meteorological Department updated its weather warning, placing the central district of Thrissur and northern districts of Malappuram and Kozhikode under red alert on Saturday.

An orange alert was sounded in Idukki, Palakkad and Wayanad and a yellow alert was issued in six districts.

Landslides and trees getting uprooted were reported at Poochapra and Kolappra areas, located in the interior of the hill district Idukki on Friday night. *—PTI*

Remal: Assam flood kills 8, over 3 lakh affected

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The floods in Assam in the aftermath of Cyclone Remal have so far claimed eight lives as six people including two children died in the last 24 hours.

The flood situation in Assam is still grim as nearly 3.50 lakh people, including over 78,000 children from 11 districts, have been affected by the deluge.

According to Assam State Disaster Management Authority, six people including two children, died after drowning in flood waters in the state in the last 24 hours. The administration has set up 187 relief camps and distribution centres where 68,600 people are taking shelter. *—PTI*

GSDP UP BY 16%

Telangana: Decade of triumphs and teething problems

HYDERABAD, 1 JUNE

On 2 June, 2014, Telangana was carved out as a separate state through bifurcation of Andhra Pradesh PHOTO: WIKIPEDIA COMMONS

Exponential increase in Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP), per capita income and agriculture output, sings the growth story of Telangana's decade-long journey since its separation from Andhra Pradesh on 2 June, 2014, while overall mounting debt is on the rise.

Telangana completes 10 years today and the state government has proposed to celebrate the occasion on a grand scale.

Despite 10 long years after separation, several issues such as bifurcation of assets, power bills dues, are still unresolved between Andhra Pradesh and Telangana.

During the past decade, the state has emerged as a favourite destination for investments from across various sectors. Mobile giant Apple, IT major Microsoft, Korean electronics firm Foxconn, e-commerce giant Amazon, domestic battery maker Amara Raja Group are some of the companies that stand testament to the investor-friendly environment of the state. According to provisional estimates, Telangana's GSDP (at current prices), one of the key economic health indicators of a state, in 2022-23 grew to Rs. 13,13,391 crore, with a growth of 16.3 per cent, from Rs 5,05,849 crore in 2014-15. Per Capita Income at current prices in 2022-23 was Rs. 3.12 lakh which is Rs 1.40 lakh higher than the National average (1,72,276). *—PTI*

DELHI BACKS PALESTINE

People take part in a protest organised by Palestine Solidarity Committee in support of Palestinians amid the ongoing war in Gaza, at Jantar Mantar in New Delhi, on Saturday
PHOTO: PTI

Nicotine marketing targets teens just as it did years ago

Research shows nicotine exposure results in long-term changes to the brain. Most e-cigarettes contain nicotine, and all of them hold dozens of dangerous chemicals
PHOTO: FREEPIK

About 37 million children ages 13 to 15 around the world use tobacco, according to a 2024 report from the World Health Organisation.

In 2023, e-cigarettes were the most commonly used tobacco product in the US, with 7.7 per cent of middle school and high school students reporting e-cigarette use. Cigarettes were the next most common, with 1.6 per cent of middle- and high school students saying they had consumed them in the past month.

Research shows that most people who use tobacco start in childhood.

I am a public health researcher who studies the different ways in which corporations influence adolescent health, with current projects focused on identifying sources of exposure to tobacco marketing among adolescents and young adults.

Smoking is harmful to every organ in the human body and is known to cause many types of cancers and heart disease, among other problems. Nicotine, by itself, in products like e-cigarettes and oral pouches, is harmful to adolescent brain development.

The adolescent brain develops into early adulthood, especially in the prefrontal cortex. This part of the brain is involved in higher cognitive development, including functions pertaining to attention, memory and cognitive flexibility.

Research has shown that nicotine exposure results in long-term functional and structural changes in the brain.

Decades of research have documented how tobacco companies marketed tobacco products for years to attract young customers in order to sustain and grow their businesses.

In a 2021 study, my team and I showed that exposure to e-cigarette marketing with cartoon images decreased high school students' perceptions of harm from e-cigarettes. Research makes clear that this change in perspective can make adolescents more open to trying e-cigarettes.

In an earlier study, my team and I examined the impact of e-cigarette product placement and imagery in music videos on propensity to use e-cigarettes among young adults. We found that exposure to e-cigarette product placement in music videos increased young adults' intentions to try e-cigarettes in the future.

The emergence of social media platforms has led tobacco companies to shift their marketing tactics from traditional channels like magazines, billboards and retail stores to online channels, capitalizing on the time that young people spend on screens.

Tobacco companies have helped normalise tobacco use online with the help of branded social media account pages and social media influencers. For example, in 2021, researchers discovered that e-cigarettes were being used and promoted by influencers on Amazon-owned Twitch, a video-sharing platform popular among adolescent gamers.

Similarly, streaming platforms normalize tobacco use. For example, in a 2022 study, my team and I analyzed Netflix original TV shows and films for e-cigarette-related content. Most notably, we documented brief representations of teenagers holding e-cigarettes in the PG-13 film "Hubie Halloween." Our findings contradict Netflix's no e-cigarette pledge for PG-13 content.

Most parents, teachers and other authority figures are likely unaware of the extent to which young people are exposed to tobacco content online, including tobacco ads and peer-generated posts on social media that normalise tobacco use.

Campaigns focused on tobacco-related digital media literacy could create awareness about tobacco products and describe how they are being marketed in the digital environment. There are various evidence-based resources that could be built upon to help young people evaluate tobacco advertising messages, empowering digital and social media users to actively evaluate information rather than remain a passive target for the industry's marketing.

I am certain that increased awareness could prevent young people from consuming tobacco.

—The Conversation

SALAR ساڈا

Study: Only 28 per cent Indians eat healthy food

A new global report has raised concerns about dietary habits in India, highlighting a significant increase in the consumption of unhealthy foods compared to nutritious options. More people in India consume unhealthy foods such as salty or fried snacks, compared to those consuming vegetables, fruits and other micronutrient-rich-foods, the paper said.

As a result of poor diet, 16.6 per cent of the country's population suffers from malnutrition, the report found.

At least 38 per cent of the Indian population ate unhealthy foods, while only 28 per cent ate all five recommended food groups, which include at least one starchy staple food, one vegetable, one fruit, one pulse, nut or seed and one animal-source food.

Emerging trends in Indian diets

The consumption of such calorie-dense and nutrient-poor foods was not only high but was also increasing, while the consumption of vegetables and other micronutrient-rich foods was low, the paper found.

In India and other South Asian countries, consumption of processed foods (chocolates and sugar confectioneries, salty snacks, beverages, ready-made and convenience foods, and breakfast cereals) is on the rise. After cereals and milk, snacks and prepared foods accounted for the majority of Indian food budgets.

In India, the proportion of the population suffering from malnutrition increased from 15.4% in 2011 to 16.6% by 2021. This means that nearly 17% of the Indian population's regular food consumption was insufficient to provide the dietary energy levels needed to live an active and healthy life.

The prevalence of overweight in adults increased from 12.9% in 2006 to 16.4% in 2016.

According to the report's analysis of data from a large nationally representative panel of households, India's total annual household expenditure on paid meals consumed away from home increased from Rs 619 billion ($8.8 billion) in 2015 to Rs 820 billion ($11.6 billion) in 2019, a real-term increase of approximately $3 billion.

Similarly, the share of packaged (highly processed and calorie-dense) foods in household food budgets nearly doubled during this period, to 12 per cent from 6.5 per cent.

Wealthier households spent a greater share of their food budgets on processed foods. It was unclear, however, whether increased spending on prepared and ultra-processed foods is crowding out the consumption of healthier foods like fruits and vegetables.

Calorie-dense foods cheaper

In the South Asian region, the report highlighted that micronutrient-rich foods were expensive, whereas cereals, fats and oils, sugar, and sugary and salty snacks were relatively inexpensive.

For example, dark green leafy vegetables and vitamin A-rich fruits and vegetables cost 22 times more per calorie than starchy staples and twice as much per calorie as sugary and salty snacks. In addition, calories from fats and oils and sugar cost even less than those from staples in India and other South Asian countries.

Indian Council of Medical Research (ICMR) recently released dietary guidelines warning that the information presented on packaged food can be misleading.

Cereal-centric agriculture and food policies

Agriculture and food policies in South Asia, like in many other developing countries, continue to prioritise the affordability of starchy staples over the diverse diets required for long-term health. Rice, wheat, and sugarcane growers, for example, are eligible for price guarantees in India. Similarly, rice farmers in Sri Lanka have preferential access to subsidised fertiliser.

Experts stressed the importance of prioritising improving diets as a critical entry point for addressing all forms of malnutrition and diet-related NCDs.

—Courtesy Downtoearth

The consumption of calorie-dense and nutrient-poor foods was not only high but was also increasing, while the consumption of vegetables and other micronutrient-rich foods was low
PHOTO: FREEPIK

LETTERS

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Islamophobia & narratives in the Lok Sabha election

Muzaffar H Assadi

It is a tragedy that minorities have become the focus of political narratives, targets of political vendettas, and victims of vicious campaigning during Lok Sabha elections. It is, however, not a simple issue of a desperate attempt by the ruling party to clinch power. Instead, it is a component of more generalised Islamophobic ideas, thoughts, philosophies and patterns that are pervasive on a national and international scale. The narratives also become a symbol of binary opposition between the majority and minority, who are not only antagonistic but also perpetual enemies.

Islamophobia

While stereotyping minorities, it creates a sense of victimhood among the majority and translates the community identity into a communal identity. It attempts to resurrect the memories of historical humiliation, such as the crimes committed, the devastation of houses of worship, the conversion of nearby communities, the type of slavery, and the ensuing alienation experienced by the majority community. All these were used as political torpedoes to merge the majoritarian identity with the state. The consecration of Ram Lala in Ayodhya and divinity declaration witnessed the beginning of the merger of the state with the majoritarian culture.

Changing narrative

Initially the political narrative in this year's Lok Sabha elections revolved around winning more than 400 seats, given that the ruling dispensation was sure of repeating its performance in the previous General Election. "Abki paar 400 paar" became the campaign's focal point assuming that several factors, including the dedication of Ram Lalla's statue, the repeal of Article 370, the elimination of triple talaq, the implementation of Citizenship Amendment Act, the awarding of Bharat Ratna to Karpoori Thakur, Charan Singh, Swaminathan, and others, populist schemes for people with low incomes and women, PM's charisma and his international stature, the equally awful opposition leadership, etc., would make its victory far more easy than one would have predicted. Once its calculation slowly received flak, in each succeeding phase, the narratives and discourses during the campaign trail shifted to minorities.

The new discourse blended many myths, imagined histories, negation, and refusal despite being as old as colonialism. During the campaigning, the minorities were much maligned, slandered, and vilified.

Islamophobia in history

Islamophobia as a thought process, as an idea, and as a conceptual category first appeared in the political domain in the 1990s, though its origins can be found in the immediate birth of the religion and subsequently during medieval and colonial eras. The Christian fathers were the first one to scrutinise religion, calling frequently Prophet as "imposter," with a critical role played by St John (676-749), a disciple of Lord Jesus. The call given by Pope Urban II to liberate Jerusalem from Muslims ended in the First Crusade (1096-1099) war, followed by three more wars. Populist Italian poet and philosopher Dante (1265–1321), in his "Divine Comedy," a collection of poems, refused to acknowledge Islam as a religion, and, believed that Islam was a heresy against Christianity. Incidentally, his writings sowed the seeds for a "civilizational clash" between the two Semitic religions — Christianity and Islam. .

Minorities have become the focus of political narratives
PHOTO: PTI

Colonialism and Islam

Indeed, colonialism and Islamophobia went together, as both mutually co-existed. Colonisation brought strong memories of hatred, never-ending conflict, and conquest. Colonialism had three tasks: one dismissing the contribution of the faith and its followers; secondly stereotyping and thirdly creating spaces for perpetual hegemony and dividing Muslim world.

It all began with critically questioning its basic structure, amorphous knowledge production, arts, science, architecture, political philosophy, and its relation to the state and mundane issues. Paradoxically, Ibn Sina, a Spanish Arab philosopher who introduced great Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle to Western World, was denied a space in the Western knowledge system. The contribution of Al Haytham in his Kitab al-Manazir for optic science; Al-Tusi of then Persia who worked in astronomy, ethics, mathematics and philosophy; Al-Khwarizmi in algebra and Algorithm; Jabir ibn Hayan in chemistry; Al-Rizvi and Ibn-Sina in medicine; Al-Battani and Phargani in astronomy; Al-Khazini for kinetics etc. were condemned or suppressed from the gaze of public domain.

The colonial powers used stereotypes to maintain their perpetual hegemony over the Islamic world, portraying the Muslim world as mysterious and lazy, as Edward Said put it in his book Orientalism. Local culture was replaced with colonial culture, and various social systems, including caste, ethnic groups, and tribalism, were enlisted and condemned using different terms. Finally, Islamophobia changed the course of world politics. During and after the two World Wars, colonial powers divided the Muslim world into several tiny nations that posed no threat to Western interests. After driving the Palestinians from their land, Israel was established, fostered, and planted as a hostile state— much against the wishes of the Arab world. Colonialism also created spaces for Hindutva perspective growing, which continued to have its spillover effect even today.

Savarkar illustrated this in his "Essentials of Hindutva," and Bankim Chatterjee did the same in his "Anand Math" Devi Chaudury Rani" and "Sitaram". For Bankim, Indian nationalism was nothing short of Hindu nationalism and advocated strong Hindu Rastra. Savarkar, much before writing on Hindutva, supported Hindu Muslim unity for Swaraja and Swabhimana while detailing the first War of Independence.

Post colonialism and Islamophobia

Islamophobia as an idea and a thought surged dramatically in the 1990s, both internationally and in India. John P Huntington's Clash of Civilisations, a well-known political theory, was one of the books that affected Islamophobia worldwide. Huntington classified seven civilisations that have been at war with each other throughout history. He believed that Islamic civilizations constitute the Anglo-Saxon world's primary enemy, although Islamic countries are not homogenous. This analysis served as the theoretical foundation for attacking Afghanistan, the Taliban, ISIS, and several other nations. In the Indian context, unlike the West, where it took a racist form, it traversed through Hindu-Muslim conflict, narrative on "appeasement", Uniform Civil Code, abrogation of Article 370, Triple Talaq, cow protection, the consecration of Ram Lalla statue, etc.

The primary forms of Islamophobia, aside from these, were history texts, medieval history, and the history of partition, population explosion, identity markers like the hijab, food culture, Azan, and dress culture. The latter intensified with the rise in terrorism, militant groups, and the frequency of riots and attacks, including the attack on Parliament. Paradoxically, even Covid-19 added fuel to Islamophobia, as they were targeted as super spreaders.

The construction of narratives that minorities snatching away the reservation meant for OBCs, that they are multiplying to be the majority, that they are resorting to vote jihad, forest and land jihad, that they have the first claim over national resources, etc., shows the trajectory and the way the colonial/postcolonial and Hindutva form of Islamophobia converging and the distinctive nature of Indian form of Islamophobia in the campaign trail, which tends to stereotypes, and marginalize the minorities as equal citizens of India.

Can there be any solution?

Given that two historical figures, Gandhi and Ambedkar, had opposed such a trend growing in India during the colonial period? Paradoxically, Ambedkar has been appropriated to advance the ideology of Islamophobia, and Gandhi has been accused of too much appeasing the Minorities and charged with all the contemporary ills, including poverty and backwardness that India is undergoing.

Prof Muzaffar H Assadi is a political analyst, former Political Scientist & Dean Faculty of Arts, Mysuru University. The opinions are the writer's own.

PHOTO: FREEPIK

SL arrests handler of 4 ISIS suspects detained in India

COLOMBO, 1 JUNE

Sri Lankan Police have arrested the suspected handler of the four of its nationals who were arrested at Ahmedabad airport in India for their alleged links with the banned Islamic State (ISIS) outfit. The Criminal Investigation Department arrested Pushparaja Osman, 46, on Friday in Colombo.

Sri Lanka Police recently announced a cash award of Rs 2 million for any credible information on his whereabouts. Police had issued a wanted notice and a video of him seeking information from the public. The CID arrested him and he was believed to have made telephone contact with the four people arrested at the Ahmedabad airport, the police said. The Gujarat Anti-Terrorist Squad arrested four Sri Lankans with links to ISIS at the airport in Ahmedabad. *—PTI*

Tamil survivors of Lanka's brutal civil war live in fear

MULLAITIVU, 1 JUNE

At the site of a bloody battlefield that marked the end of Sri Lanka's civil war, Singaram Soosaimuthu fishes every day with his son, casting nets and reeling them in. It is a skill he has known for much of his life — and one that he had to relearn after a devastating injury. The former Tamil fighter lost both legs in 2009 as the nation's generation-long civil war drew to a close and the Tamils retreated in defeat. Making something of himself despite his injuries brought Soosaimuthu success — an achievement in which he finds profound meaning. He sees his fellow ethnic Tamils in the same light: To regain their voice, they must thrive. But defeat — bloody, protracted and decisive — has brought Sri Lanka's minority Tamil community to a point of despair. *—AP*

New air cargo route inaugurated between China, Pak

ISLAMABAD, 1 JUNE

A new air cargo route has been launched between Pakistan and China to further enhance trade ties between the two all-weather allies, ahead of Prime Minister Shehbaz Sharif's visit to Beijing next week. According to the state-run Associated Press of Pakistan news agency, the new air cargo route inaugurated on May 28 linked Guizhou, China with Karachi, Pakistan. The route was launched with the departure of an all-cargo plane carrying six tonnes of freight, including clothing, electronics, and various commodities, from Guiyang, the capital of Guizhou, China Economic Net reported. After nearly six hours of flight time, the plane arrived in Karachi. *—PTI*

UK ambassador to Mexico apparently no longer in post

LONDON, 1 JUNE

The UK's ambassador to Mexico has left his post after a video was posted on social media that purportedly shows him pointing an assault rifle at an embassy employee. The Financial Times reported Friday that Jon Benjamin was traveling in Sinaloa and Durango, two states in northern Mexico where drug cartels have a significant presence, when the incident occurred. The video posted on the social media platform X shows a man who looks like Benjamin seated in the front seat of a vehicle, when he picks up the supposed rifle and points it at someone in the back seat. The five-second clip was posted by an anonymous user along with the message, "In a context of daily killings in Mexico by drug dealers, he dares to joke." the FCDO website no longer lists Benjamin as ambassador. *—AP*

WAR WITH CHINA IS CERTAIN: US

Austin stressed the gravity of renewed talks with his Chinese counterpart

SINGAPORE, 1 JUNE

United States Secretary of Defence Lloyd Austin told a gathering of top security officials Saturday that war with China was neither imminent nor unavoidable, despite rapidly escalating tensions in the Asia-Pacific region, stressing the importance of renewed dialogue between him and his Chinese counterpart in avoiding "miscalculations and misunderstandings."

Austin's comments at the Shangri-La defence forum in Singapore came the day after he met for more than an hour on the sidelines with Chinese Defence Minister Dong Jun, the first in-person meeting between the top defence officials since contacts between the American and Chinese militaries broke down in 2022 after then-US House Speaker Nancy Pelosi visited Taiwan, infuriating Beijing.

Neither side budged from their longstanding positions on Taiwan — which China claims as its own and has not ruled out using force to take — and on China's sweeping claims in the South China Sea, which has led to direct confrontations between China and other nations in the region, most notably the Philippines.

While declining to detail the specifics of their conversation, Austin said the most important thing was that the two were again talking. "As long as we're talking, we're able to identify those issues that are troublesome and that we want to make sure that we have placed guardrails to ensure there are no misperceptions and no miscalculations … that can spiral out of control," he said.

"You can only do that kind of thing if you are talking." Addressing the same forum on Friday night, Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr bluntly outlined what could be at stake, saying that if a Filipino were killed as China confronts his country's coast guard and merchant fleet to press its claims in the South China Sea, it would be "very, very close to what we define as an act of war and therefore we will respond accordingly."

> As long as we're talking, we're able to identify those issues that are troublesome and that we want to make sure that we have placed guardrails to ensure there are no misperceptions and no miscalculations … that can spiral out of control
>
> -Lloyd Austin, United States Secretary of Defence

Marcos added that he assumed the Philippines' treaty partners, which include the US, "hold the same standard." In his own speech, Austin lauded how Marcos "spoke so powerfully last night about how the Philippines is standing up for its sovereign rights under international law." But when pressed later, he would not say how the US might react if a Filipino were killed in a confrontation with China, calling it hypothetical.

He did say the US commitment to the Philippines as a treaty partner is "ironclad," while again stressing the importance of dialogue with China.

Beijing in recent years has been rapidly expanding its navy and is becoming growingly assertive in pressing its claim to virtually the entire South China Sea. *—AP*

11 hurt as Turkish drone kills 4 US fighters in Syria

QAMISHLI, 1 JUNE

Turkish drone strikes in northeastern Syria on evening killed four US-backed fighters and wounded 11 civilians, the Kurdish-led force said.

The strikes on areas held by the US-backed and Kurdish-led Syrian Democratic Forces came a day after Turkey's president said his government won't hesitate to act against Kurdish-led groups in northern Syria if they proceed with plans to hold local elections. It accuses the groups of having links to outlawed Kurdish militants in Turkey. SDF said drone strikes hit its positions eight times as well as civilian homes and vehicles in and near the northern city of Qamishli. Such Turkish strikes are not uncommon in northeastern Syria. The Kurdish Red Crescent said that as its paramedics were trying to reach the attacked areas, a Turkish strike hit one of its ambulances. *—AP*

Biden unveils proposal to end Gaza war

WASHINGTON, 1 JUNE

US President Joe Biden has urged Hamas to accept a new Israeli proposal to end the conflict in Gaza, saying that "it's time for this war to end".

The three-part proposal would begin with a six-week ceasefire in which the Israel Defence Forces (IDF) would withdraw from populated areas of Gaza. There would also be a "surge" of humanitarian aid, as well as an exchange of some hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

The deal would eventually lead to a permanent "cessation of hostilities" and a major reconstruction plan for Gaza. Hamas said it views the proposal "positively". Speaking at the White House on Friday, Mr Biden said that the first phase of the proposed plan would include a "full and complete ceasefire", the withdrawal of IDF forces from populated areas and the exchange of hostages for Palestinian prisoners.

Palestinians fleeing from the southern Gaza city of Rafah during an Israeli ground and air offensive in the city PHOTO: PTI

"This is truly a decisive moment," he said. "Hamas says it wants a ceasefire. This deal is an opportunity to prove whether they really mean it." The ceasefire, he added, would allow more humanitarian aid to reach the beleaguered territory, with "600 trucks carrying aid into Gaza every single day".

The second phase would see all remaining living hostages returned, including male soldiers. The ceasefire would then become "the cessation of hostilities, permanently." Among those who have urged Hamas to agree to the proposal was UK Foreign Secretary David Cameron, who said on X that the group "must accept this deal so we can see a stop in the fighting".

"We've long argued a stop in the fighting can be turned into a permanent peace if we are all prepared to take the right steps," Lord Cameron added. "Let's seize this moment and bring this conflict to an end."

UN Secretary General Antonio Guterres also welcomed the development in a post to X, formerly known as Twitter. He said the world had "witnessed too much suffering [and] destruction in Gaza" and said it was "time to stop". *—BBC News*

Philippines warns China against 'acts of war' amidst standoff

SINGAPORE, 1 JUNE

Philippine President Ferdinand Marcos Jr has warned China not to cross a red line in the South China Sea. He said if any Filipino died as a result of Beijing's wilful actions, Manila would consider it as close to "an act of war" and respond accordingly.

Addressing the defence-and-security focused Shangri La Dialogue here on Friday night, Marcos sought to deepen defence cooperation with the US as he stands up to the Chinese military's aggressive actions in the South China Sea.

"We shall strengthen our alliances with the United States and our strategic partnerships with Australia, Japan, Vietnam, Brunei, and all the other member states of ASEAN. We will also pursue more robust collaborations with countries such as the Republic of Korea, India amongst others," Marcos said.

Marcos said the Philippines and other Southeast Asian countries had a vision for "peace, stability, and prosperity" in the South China Sea, but that this was being undermined by other actors.

China's determining influence over the security situation and the economic evolution of this region is a permanent fact, he said. *—PTI*

African National Congress vote collapses in S Africa poll result

JOHANNESBURG, 1 JUNE

After the governing African National Congress (ANC), the biggest loser in this election is the radical Economic Freedom Fighters (EFF), led by Julius Malema.

The EFF has lost it status as South Africa's second-biggest Opposition party to a first-time contestant - former President Jacob Zuma's new party, uMkhonto weSizwe (MK), which translates as Spear of the Nation.

With nearly all results declared, the EFF is standing at 9%, down from the 11% it got in the last election.

MK's vote is standing at 15%, with the party having picked up votes from the ANC and EFF. This is a huge blow to Malema and the EFF.

He has ambitions to one day become South Africa's president, and had hoped that the EFF will take second spot in this election, making him the leader of the biggest Opposition party.

Nomvula Mokonyane, the ANC's deputy secretary-general, refused to give much away when she was surrounded by reporters at the party's desk in the election results centre in Johannesburg earlier.

However, Democratic Alliance (DA), to grow exponentially.

The new MK party, led by ex-President Jacob Zuma, is in third place with 15 per cent. The distribution of seats in the 400-member National Assembly directly reflects the vote share. *—BBC News*

CAMPAIGNING MOOD

Prime Minister Rishi Sunak launches the Conservative campaign bus during a speech on Saturday PHOTO: PTI

MILLIONS WIPED FROM DONALD TRUMP'S FORTUNE

WASHINGTON, 1 JUNE

Donald Trump's paper fortune dropped by hundreds of millions of dollars on Friday as shares in his media firm came under pressure in the wake of his conviction in his New York hush-money trial.

Trump Media & Technology Group's stock finished the day down 5.3 per cent on Wall Street, denting the value of the former president's vast stake in the business. By the time markets closed for the day, Trump's stake stood at about $5.6bn. An extraordinary market debut in March by Trump Media, the owner of Truth Social, bolstered Trump's paper fortune by billions of dollars – and propelled him, for the first time, into the ranks of the world's 500 wealthiest people – as he grapples with hefty legal costs.

But shares in Trump Media are prone to volatile fluctuations, and Trump is unable to start offloading his stake until September, due to a lock-up agreement. When New York's stock exchange closed on Thursday, about an hour before Trump was found guilty of 34 counts of falsifying business records in a criminal hush-money scheme, his stake in Trump Media was worth more than $5.9bn. *—The Guardian*

Serial killer dies after prison assault

OTTAWA, 1 JUNE

Canadian serial killer Robert Pickton, who took female victims to his pig farm during a crime spree near Vancouver in the late 1990s and early 2000s, has died after being assaulted in prison, authorities said Friday. He was 74.

The Correctional Service of Canada said in a statement that Pickton, an inmate of Port-Cartier Institution in the province of Quebec, died in hospital following injuries in the 19 May assault involving another inmate. A 51-year-old inmate was in custody for the assault on Pickton, police spokesman Hugues Beaulieu said earlier this month. Robert "Willie" Pickton was convicted of six counts of second-degree murder and sentenced to life in prison in 2007, after being charged with the murders of 26 women.

Robert Pickton PHOTO: BCTV-Vancouve

Police began searching the Pickton farm in the Vancouver suburb of Port Coquitlam more than 22 years ago in what would be a years-long investigation into the disappearances of dozens of women from Vancouver's seediest streets, sex workers and users of drugs abandoned on the margins of society. *—AP*

River ferry sinks in Afghanistan, 20 dead

ISLAMABAD, 1 JUNE

At least 20 people were killed when a boat sank while crossing a river in eastern Afghanistan Saturday morning, a Taliban official said.

Quraishi Badlon, provincial director of the information and culture department in Nangarhar province, said that the boat sank while crossing a river in Mohmand Dara district, killing 20 people including women and children.

Badlon said that the boat was carrying 25 people, according to village residents, of whom five survived. So far five bodies have been retrieved including a man, a woman, two boys and a girl, said the Nangarhar health department in a statement. It added that a medical team and ambulances were sent to the area.

The officials didn't provide details on the cause of the accident and said that rescuers are still searching for other bodies. Residents of the area frequently use locally made boats to travel between villages and local markets. *—AP*

FOR 1ST TIME IN MONTHS

Russia, Ukraine exchange POWs

SUMY REGION, 1 JUNE

Ukraine and Russia exchanged prisoners of war (POW) on Friday, each sending back 75 POWs in the first such swap in the past three months, officials said.

A few hours earlier and at the same location, the two sides also handed over the bodies of their fallen soldiers.

The Ukrainian POWs, including four civilians, were returned on several buses that drove into the northern Sumy region. As they disembarked, they shouted joyfully and called their families to tell them they were home. Some knelt and kissed the ground while many wrapped themselves in yellow-blue flags and hugged one another, breaking into tears. Many appeared emaciated and poorly dressed.

Ukrainian servicemen shout "Glory to Ukraine" after returning from captivity during POWs exchange in Sumy region, Ukraine on Friday PHOTO: PTI

The exchange of the 150 POWs in all was the fourth swap this year and the 52nd since Russia invaded Ukraine in February 2022.

The United Arab Emirates said it helped negotiate this latest exchange.

The two sides have traded blame for what they say is a slowdown in the swaps. *—AP*

'Discussions on Ukraine war difficult now'
Beijing, 1 June

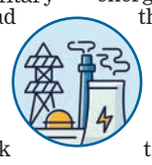
China said Friday it would be "'hard to meet" calls for discussions on the Russia-Ukraine war, citing problems with arrangements that appear to point to Beijing's strongly pro-Moscow stance. Foreign Ministry Mao Ning said that "China's hopes appear to be hard to meet at the meeting".

19 injured as Russia hits Ukraine's power grid

KYIV, 1 JUNE

Russia pummelled Ukraine's energy infrastructure with a large-scale drone and missile attack Saturday, injuring at least 19 people, local officials said.

The Ukrainian military reported that it had downed 35 out of the 53 missiles launched at targets across the country overnight on 1 June, as well as 46 out of 47 attack drones. Injuries were reported by officials across the country, including in Ukraine's western Lviv region and the central Dnipropetrovsk region.



12 people, including eight children, were hospitalised after a strike close to two houses where they were sheltering in the Kharkiv region, said Governor Oleh Syniehubov. The strikes were part of a series of sustained attacks by Russia against Ukraine's power grid, which has been ongoing since March.

Ukraine's largest private energy firm, DTEK said that two of its power plants had been seriously damaged in what it said was the sixth attack on the company's plants in two and a half months. Meanwhile, Ukraine's Energy Minister, Herman Halushchenko, said that energy infrastructure in the Zaporizhzhia, Dnipropetrovsk, Donetsk, Kirovohrad and Ivano-Frankivsk regions had also been targeted. *—AP*

Hyundai sales up 7 pc at 63,551 units in May

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

G Hyundai Motor India Ltd (HMIL) on Saturday reported 7 per cent year-on-year increase in total sales at 63,551 units in May. The company sold a total of 59,601 units in May 2023, HMIL said in a statement. Domestic dispatch of vehicles to dealers saw 1 per cent rise to 49,151 units last month from 48,601 units in the year-ago period. Exports grew 31 per cent in May to 14,400 units, as compared with 11,000 units in the year-ago period. "We have maintained a healthy total sales volume in May 2024, despite a week-long routine bi-annual maintenance shutdown at our Sriperumbudur factory," HMIL COO Tarun Garg said. SUVs continue to be a growth driver for HMIL, accounting for more than 67 per cent of domestic sales last month, he added."Our rural penetration stood at a healthy 20.1 per cent in May," Garg said.—*PTI*

Mahindra sales rise 17 pc in May at 71,682 units

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Mahindra & Mahindra on Saturday said its total wholesales increased 17 per cent year-on-year to 71,682 units in May. The company's total dispatches to its dealers stood at 61,415 units in May 2023. The Mumbai-based auto major's passenger vehicle sales in the domestic market rose 31 per cent to 43,218 units last month against 32,886 units in May 2023, it said in a statement. Exports rose 2 per cent year-on-year to 2,671 units last month from 2,616 units in May 2023. Mahindra's Farm Equipment Sector (FES) reported 9 per cent increase in total tractor sales at 37,109 units as against 34,126 units for the same period last year. "Coupled with timely arrival of southwest monsoon in Kerala and northeast states and forecast of an above normal monsoon has improved the on-ground sentiments of farmers," Mahindra & Mahindra President, Farm Equipment Sector Hemant Sikka said. Land preparation activities for Kharif crops are expected to begin on time, which is likely to boost tractor demand in coming months, he added.—*PTI*

Windfall tax on petroleum cut to ₹5,200/tonne

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The government has reduced windfall tax on domestically-produced crude oil to Rs 5,200 per tonne from Rs 5,700 with effect from Saturday. The tax is levied in the form of Special Additional Excise Duty (SAED). SAED on the export of diesel, petrol and jet fuel or ATF, has been retained at 'nil'. The new rates are effective from 1 June, an official notification said. India first imposed windfall profit taxes on 1 July, 2022, joining a host of nations that tax supernormal profits of energy companies. The tax rates are reviewed every fortnight based on average oil prices in the previous two weeks. —*PTI*

Dindigul receives in-principal listing approval from BSE

MUMBAI,1 JUNE

Dindigul Farm Products Limited is primarily engaged in processing of Whole milk and skimmed milk to make dairy ingredients including milk protein concentrates, skimmed milk powder, dairy whitener, whey protein concentrate, milk whey powder, casein, unbranded cream, butter and fat-filled powders for infant milk formula. The processing facility is situated at Dindigul, Tamil Nadu, India and is spread over 15 acres. Dindigul Farm Product Limited has filed the Draft Red Herring Prospectus with BSE SME for raising funds through a public offer. The company will issue fresh equity shares of 64,50,000. : The company plans to allocate the net proceeds from the issue to the following purposes:1. Funding Capital Expenditure 2. To meet working capital requirement3. General Corporate Purpose.—*PTI*

RBI to expand UPI to 20 countries by 2028-29: Study

In 2024, UPI connectivity between India and Sri Lanka was launched

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) along with NPCI international payments ltd (NIPL) will work towards taking UPI to 20 countries by FY29. RBI Annual report says possibilities will be explored for increasing the global footprints of UPI and RuPay.

"In light of goals for Viksit Bharat 2047, the Reserve Bank, along with NPCI International Payments Ltd. (NIPL) will work towards taking UPI to 20 countries with initiation timeline of 2024-25 and completion timeline of 2028-29," the report said.

The RBI report further adds "Fast Payment System (FPS) collaboration with group of countries like European Union and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC), as well as multilateral linkages will be explored".

The Payments Vision Document 2025 of RBI has outlined expanding the global outreach of UPI and RuPay cards as one of the key objectives under the internationalisation pillar. The Reserve Bank is in talks with central banks of various countries for entering into collaborative arrangements.

The RBI report further adds FPS collaboration with group of countries like European Union and SAARC **PHOTO: PTI**

In July 2023, the Reserve Bank and the Central Bank of the UAE (CBUAE) signed a memorandum of understanding (MoU) for interlinking their payments infrastructure. Under this MoU, India and UAE have agreed to cooperate on linking their Fast Payment Systems, UPI of India with Instant Payment Platform (IPP) of UAE called Aani. Both countries also agreed to link their respective Card Switches (RuPay switch and UAESWITCH).

In February 2024, RuPay cards and UPI connectivity between India and Mauritius was launched. With this connectivity, an Indian traveller to Mauritius will be able to pay a merchant in Mauritius using UPI apps.

Similarly, a Mauritian traveller will be able to do the same in India using the instant payment system apps of Mauritius

In February 2024, UPI connectivity between India and Sri Lanka was launched. This connectivity has enabled Indian travellers to make QR code-based payments at merchant locations in Sri Lanka using UPI apps. —*ANI*

- The Reserve Bank of India (RBI) along with NPCI international payments ltd (NIPL) will work towards taking UPI to 20 countries by FY29. RBI Annual report says possibilities will be explored for increasing the global footprints of UPI and RuPay. "In light of goals for Viksit Bharat 2047, the Reserve Bank, along with NPCI International Payments Ltd

THIRD STRAIGHT REDUCTION

ATF price cut by 6.5%, commercial LPG ₹69 cheaper

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Jet fuel or ATF price on Saturday was reduced by a steep 6.5 per cent and that of commercial LPG used by hotels and restaurants by Rs 69 per 19-kg cylinder on declining international oil prices.

Aviation turbine fuel (ATF) price was cut by Rs 6,673.87 per kilolitre, or 6.5 per cent, to Rs 94,969.01 per kl in the national capital, according to a price notification of state-owned fuel retailers.

The reduction follows a marginal 0.7 per cent (Rs 749.25 per kl) increase on 1 May.

The ATF rate in Mumbai was slashed to Rs 88,834.27 per kl from Rs 95,173.70.

Prices differ from state to state depending on the incidence of local taxes.

Alongside, oil firms also cut the price of commercial LPG by Rs 69 to Rs 1,676 per 19-kg cylinder.

This is the third straight monthly reduction in rates. The price was on 1 May reduced by Rs 19 per cylinder and by Rs 30.5 on 1 April.

Rate of cooking gas used in domestic households, however, remained unchanged at Rs 803 per 14.2-kg cylinder.

PHOTO: PTI

1 April saw the first reduction in commercial LPG prices since January. The rate had gone up by Rs 14 per cylinder on 1 February and Rs 25.5 on 1 March.

State-owned Indian Oil Corporation (IOC), Bharat Petroleum Corporation Ltd (BPCL), and Hindustan Petroleum Corporation Ltd (HPCL) revise prices of ATF and cooking gas on 1st of every month based on the average price of benchmark international fuel and foreign exchange rate.

Prices of petrol and diesel continue to remain frozen. Rates had been cut by Rs 2 per litre in mid-March. Petrol costs Rs 94.72 a litre in Delhi while diesel is priced at Rs 87.62. —*PTI*

BUSTING MARKET RUMOUR

Top 100 firms to verify market rumours promptly starting 1 June

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

The top 100 listed companies by market capitalisation will have to confirm or deny any market rumour reported in the mainstream media from this Saturday.

The rule will be applicable for top 250 companies from 1 December.

Under the Sebi's rule, these companies will have to 'confirm, deny, or clarify any reported event or information in the mainstream media that is not general in nature and that indicates that rumours of an impending specific material event' are circulating amongst the investing public within 24 hours from the reporting of the information.

Sebi through its newly introduced rumour verification framework has excluded the price volatility in arriving at average market price for the purpose of corporate actions in a bid to make it fair for all investors at large.

"The move would dissuade leaking of information that would affect the valuation in the given corporation action. This initiative of Sebi would help strengthen the rumour verification framework. It would help in achieving a fair market thereby making it a preferred market for investors all over the world," Makarand M Joshi, founder, MMJC and Associates, a corporate compliance firm, said. —*PTI*

The rule will be applicable for top 250 companies from 1 December **PHOTO: PTI**

Stellantis picks Shailesh as CEO, MD of India operations

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Automaker Stellantis on Saturday said it has appointed Shailesh Hazela as CEO and Managing Director of India operations.

Hazela succeeds Aditya Jairaj, who will be relocating to the US.

Previously, Hazela served as Vice President, Global Purchasing and Supply Chain for India & Asia Pacific region for Stellantis.

He brings a wealth of experience and a proven track record in driving growth and innovation, the company said in a statement.

Since joining Stellantis in September 2022, Hazela has focused on leveraging the supply base across India, ASEAN, Korea, Japan, and other regions, and developing the supply base for Stellantis in India & Asia Pacific (IAP) region, it added.

Stellantis operates three manufacturing plants (Ranjangaon, Hosur, Thiruvallur), an ICT hub (Hyderabad), Software Centre (Bengaluru), and two R&D centers in Chennai and Pune.

Stellantis is focusing on manufacturing in India as it is the only country where the company locally produces four Jeep nameplates(Wrangler, Compass, Meridian, and Grand Cherokee) outside North America and the Citroen C5 Aircross outside France. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

PHOTO: PTI

'67 PC USERS BELIEVE BITCOIN WILL RISE 80 PC BY YEAR END'

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Bitcoin rallied towards its $73k resistance zone fueled by ETF inflows. However, some experts warn of a potential pullback. AMBCrypto's exclusive May month's report predicts an impressive 80% growth for Bitcoin by year-end.

This insightful report dives deeper, revealing a surprising trend: memecoins are surging in popularity, even as Bitcoin eyes a significant price increase.

The report unpacks key developments shaping the market, including:

Shifting Investor Preferences: Are investors abandoning Bitcoin for memecoins? The report explores this trend and its potential impact.

Bitcoin's Path to $100k: What factors will drive Bitcoin's potential surge towards $100k? AMBCrypto's analysis sheds light on this exciting possibility.

The Rise of Layer 3: Discover how Layer 3 solutions are poised to revolutionize the blockchain landscape.

SocialFi, the Next Big Thing? The report investigates the rise of SocialFi and its potential to disrupt traditional finance.

The NFT Market: Get a comprehensive analysis of the current state and future prospects of the NFT market. —*PTI*

IIFL Samasta Finance to raise up to ₹1,000 crore via bonds

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

IIFL Samasta Finance, a non-banking microfinance company (NBFC-MFI), plans to raise up to Rs 1,000 crore through public issue of secured bonds for the purpose of capital augmentation and business growth.

The bond issue opens on 3 June and closes on 14 June, IIFL Samasta Finance said in a statement.

IIFL Samasta Finance plans to issue bonds, aggregating to Rs 200 crore, with a green-shoe option to retain over-subscription of up to Rs 800 crore, it said.

The IIFL Samasta bonds offer the highest coupon rate of 10.50 per cent per annum for a tenor of 60 months, it claimed.

The NCD is available in tenors of 24 months, 36 months and 60 months, it said, adding, the frequency of interest payment is available on monthly and annual basis for each of the series. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Attrition a big challenge in consumer market

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Amid talks of joblessness or no jobs, employee attrition remains a big challenge for India's consumer market. Employees are consistently searching for opportunities in the consumer durable and electronics sector as revealed by a report.

According to a report by staffing company TeamLease Services, employee attrition remains a significant challenge for employers in the consumer durables and electronics sector, with the cost of attrition to an organization with 1000 employees being approximately Rs 3.64 crore.

The attrition rate in the metro cities stood at 71 per cent. Tier 2 and 3 cities have comparatively lower attrition rates of 66 per cent.

India has a 590 million workforce working in the consumer electronics sector. The share of formal employment accounts for 13.6 per cent of the total employment while the organised sector accounts for 18.9 per cent and 81.1 per cent of people in the unorganised sector.

Out of 590 million, 5.4 million is the total formal temporary workforce that has grown at a CAGR of 10.4 per cent in the last five years.

The sector is characterised by a low level of education as half of the workforce has education below the 12th standard, highlighting the need for training for the employees.

The size of the consumer durables market in 2024 amounts to USD 34.7 billion, and is estimated to reach USD 45.6 billion by 2028 with a CAGR of 7.1 per cent. —*ANI*

The attrition rate in the metro cities stood at 71 per cent **PHOTO: ANI**

LNG DEMAND UP

Heat wave drives up gas power generation

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

India's natural gas-based power generation has surged in May due to intense heat wave conditions, significantly boosting the demand for more LNG cargoes for prompt deliveries in June from state-owned energy companies, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights.

As of 29 May, Indian gas-based power generation reached 4,646.53 million kilowatt-hour (kWhr) for the month, a substantial increase from 2,631 million kWhr a year earlier, according to data from the Central Electricity Authority (CEA).

The figures indicate a considerable rise compared to August and September 2023, when gas-based power generation did not exceed 4,000 million kWhr.

Market participants in the power sector suggest that generating 5 million units of electricity requires about 1 million cubic meters (MMcm) of natural gas.

This translates to a consumption of approximately 891.36 MMcm of gas during May, or 29.71 MMcm/day, equating to over 10 LNG cargoes for the month.

The CEA does not distinguish between power generation based on regasified LNG and domestically produced natural gas.

In the first quarter of 2024, total gas consumption in the power sector increased by 1.4 per cent year-on-year to 14.8 MMcm/day, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights.

Currently, around 74 per cent of India's electricity mix is coal-based, 13 per cent from renewables like wind and solar, 8 per cent from hydro, 3 per cent from nuclear, and only 2 per cent from natural gas. —*ANI*

Around 74 per cent of India's electricity mix is coal-based **PHOTO: PTI**

- India's natural gas-based power generation has surged in May due to intense heat wave conditions, significantly boosting the demand for more LNG cargoes for prompt deliveries in June from state-owned energy companies, according to S&P Global Commodity Insights

Passenger vehicle sales slow in May due to polls

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

Passenger vehicle wholesales in India witnessed a marginal growth in May on account of high base effect and muted demand due to general elections.

The overall passenger vehicle dispatches from companies to dealers stood at 3,50,257 lakh units last month as compared to 3,35,436 in the same month a year ago, registering a growth of 4 per cent.

Maruti Suzuki India (MSI) said its total domestic passenger vehicle sales rose marginally to 1,44,002 units last month from 1,43,708 units in the year-ago period.

The company saw year-on-year dip in sales of entry level and compact cars last month as against May 2023.

Utility vehicle sales, including that of Brezza, Grand Vitara, Ertiga, S-Cross and XL6, however, rose to 54,204 units last month as against 46,243 units a year earlier.

"It has been discussed that growth this year will not be very high. It will be in single digit because of the high base effect. Secondly, there were elections and the scorching temperatures also had an impact on the overall sales in May," MSI Senior Executive Officer (Marketing & Sales) Partho Banerjee told reporters.

He further said: "We are very hopeful that we will start seeing the green shoots coming with the election results coming in. I think things will turn around."

Banerjee noted that the company is going to introduce a limited edition trims of its entry level cars -- Alto K10, S-Presso and Celerio -- in order to rejuvenate the small car segment. —*PTI*

T20 WORLD CUP

WI aims for a solid start against PNG; USA opens against Canada

West Indies look to redeem themselves at home

GEORGETOWN, 1 JUNE

More than eight years after Carlos Brathwaite's four sixes at Eden Gardens gave them their second T20 world title, a wounded West Indies will look to redeem themselves at home when they begin their campaign in the event's ninth edition by taking on Papua New Guinea, here on Sunday.

They have replaced the experienced but injured Jason Holder with left-arm fast bowler Obed McCoy.McCoy was the leading wicket-taker during the West Indies A's recent tour to Nepal, grabbing eight wickets in five matches. Assadollah Vala-led PNG will make their second appearance after 2021 after sealing their spot via the East Asia-Pacific regional final in July 2023.

West Indies will take on PNG

PHOTO: X / @T20WORLDCUP

Left-arm quick Sema Kamea and Kabua Vagi Morea both enjoyed qualifying action, with the latter taking a hat-trick in the game against the Philippines.The match starts at 8 pm IST.

USA Favourites vs Canada A team full of expatriates, tournament co-hosts USA, coached by former Australian batter Stuart Law, will promise some surprises when it kicks off the T20 World Cup taking on qualifiers Canada in a battle of debutants.The USA have proved that they will be no pushovers, having beaten the full-member side Bangladesh 2-1 in the build-up to the tournament.Match starts: 6 am IST (2 June)—*PTI*

Nepal, Netherlands may end up upsetting big teams: Gilchrist

GEORGETOWN, 1 JUNE

Legendary Australian wicketkeeper Adam Gilchrist believes Nepal and the Netherlands could surprise teams like Bangladesh and Sri Lanka in the upcoming T20 World Cup. Nepal and the Netherlands are clubbed with Bangladesh, South Africa, and Sri Lanka in Group D. Gilchrist believes that the international exposure gained by the youngsters in Rohit Paudel-led Nepalese team has made them a formidable unit. —*PTI*

Adam Gilchrist

PHOTO: X / @GILLY381

Jasprit Bumrah PHOTO: PTI

I don't try to over-teach: Jasprit Bumrah

NEW YORK, 1 JUNE

Considered a mentor for the new crop ofIndian fast bowlers, pace spearhead Jasprit Bumrah says he never tries to"over-teach" the younger lot and steps in to help only when asked, toavoid burdening them with information.

The 30-year-old Bumrah would be a key player for India in the T20World Cup, starting here on Saturday and he would also be expected to be aguiding force for India's pace battery, featuring the relatively younger andless experienced Mohammed Siraj and Arshdeep Singh."You don't try to over-teach.

That is something that I havelearned," Bumrah told the ICC's official website for the T20 World Cup."Because whenever people need help, I let them have their questions... Because you don't want to give too much information," hesaid.Bumrah said it is important for youngsters to know their pathwithout being burdened with an overkill of information."It's not like they have just been lucky and they land here.So that is what I try to do.

I do pass on certain information that I havegained over from my experience," he said."But I don't try to burden them with (over) information. Because that is a part of the journey as well.

That you have to find your ways and solutions," he added. Bumrah has battled a nagging back injury for the past couple ofyears and it even kept him out of the 2022 T20 World Cup but he has managed tofight through and enjoyed a brilliant run in the 2023 ODI showpiece.He snared 20 wickets at an average of 18.65 with an economy ofjust about four in that event.

The reticent bowler said his focus since comingback has been to simply enjoy his game."Because (certain) things will go my way. —*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Norway Chess: Vaishali to take on Tingjie Lei

STAVANGER, 1 JUNE

In sole lead with a comfortable advantage of 2.5 points, Indian Grandmaster R Vaishali will take on Tingjie Lei of China in the fifth round of the Norway chess tournament here. Having amassed 8.5 points from the first four rounds, Vaishali is ahead of women's world champion Wenjun Ju of China and Anna Muzychuk of Ukraine in the USD 1,61,000 prize money tournament. With each win under Classical time control worth three points here, Vaishali has largely benefitted from victories over compatriot Koneru Humpy and veteran Pia Cramling.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Mumbai City FC sign up midfielder Brandon Fernandes

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

Mumbai City FC on Saturday signed a three-year contract with India midfielder Brandon Fernandes, who returns to the Indian Super League side after a brief stint in 2015. The 29-year-old joins the reigning ISL champions from FC Goa where he played for seven years, scoring 17 goals in 130 games across competitions, besides winning the ISL League Shield in 2019-20. Fernandes also helped FC Goa win the Indian Super Cup and the Durand Cup in 2019 and 2021, respectively.—*PTI*

PHOTO: PTI

Pranavi Urs moves into joint lead at Dormy Open

HELSINGBORG, 1 JUNE

India's Pranavi Urs continued her solid form on the Ladies European Tour, rising to the top of the leaderboard after the second round in the Dormy Open here on Saturday. Pranavi shares the lead with England's Cara Gainer (65-71). Pranavi, who had made every cut this season before withdrawing from last week's Jabra Classic, shot 2-under 70 in the rain-hit first round and then added a bogey-free 6-under 66 to go 8-under. Playing in her 10th start, Pranavi shot her season's best on LET, which bettered the 67s she shot in Lalla Meryem Cup and Aramco Series Tampa. —*PTI*

Treesa and Gayatri's dream run ends with s/f loss

SINGAPORE, 1 JUNE

Treesa Jolly and Gayatri Gopichand's stunning run at the Singapore Open came to an end with a straight-game loss to World No. 4. pair Nami Matsuyama and Chiharu Shida in the semifinals here on Saturday.

With the defeat, India's campaign at the BWF World Tour Super 750 also ended.Eyeing a hat-trick of wins against top-10 players, the unseeded Indians were no match for the Japanese who cruised to a 23-21 21-11 win in 47 minutes.

Japanese pair thus avenged its semifinal defeat against Treesa-Gayatri in the Asia Team Championship in February. The Japanese now lead 3-1 on head-to-head against the Indian world No 30 duo.

Treesa and Gayatri, the Commonwealth Games bronze medallist, had their moments in the first game when they fought their way back from being 5-10 down to make it 16-16.Matsuyama and Shida, however, continued to dominate and got the game point at 20-18. But the Indians continued to fight and saved two game points to bring it level. The Japanese again went ahead but Treesa and Gayatri saved another game point to make it 21-21 before Nami and Chiharu took a 1-0 lead in the match. —*PTI*

Treesa and Gayatri PHOTO: PTI

Dinesh Karthik PHOTO: PTI

Karthik retires from all forms of cricket

CHENNAI, 1 JUNE

Former India wicketkeeper-batter Dinesh Karthik on Saturday announced his retirement from all forms of competitive cricket after two decades of playing for the country.

While his retirement was on the cards after Royal Challengers Bengaluru's ouster from the IPL Eliminator, Karthik chose his 39th birthday to make his decision official.

"Having given plenty of thought for some time, I have decided to move on from playing competitive cricket. I officially announce my retirement and put my playing days behind me as I square up for the new challenges ahead," Karthik wrote on 'X'.

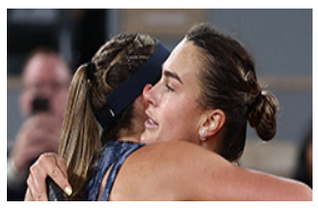
Having represented the country in 180 games across three formats, scoring 3463 runs with a lone Test hundred and 17 half-centuries, Karthik also had 172 dismissals to his credit, most of them behind the stumps with a few in the outfield.

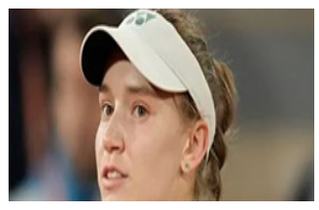
He first walked into the public imagination with his airborne stumping of Michael Vaughan in England under Sourav Ganguly in 2004 and last played for India in the 2022 T20 World Cup under Rohit Sharma.

In between, he had played under Rahul Dravid, Anil Kumble, Mahendra Singh Dhoni, and Virat Kohli.

"I'd like to thank all my coaches, captains, selectors, and members of the support staff, who have made this long journey pleasant and enjoyable," he wrote. —*PTI*

Medvedev comes out on top against Machac





Daniil Medvedev, Aryna Sabalenka and Elena Rybakina

PHOTO: X/@ROLANDGARROS

PARIS, 1 JUNE

Russian Daniil Medvedev, the No. 5 seed, advanced to the last 16 of Roland-Garros by edging out Tomas Machac 7-6 (4), 7-5, 1-6, 6-4 at Roland-Garros in Paris on Saturday afternoon.

Medvedev, ranked No. 5, will play the winner of the match between Australian Alex De Minaur, the No. 11 seed, and German Jan-Lennard Struff next.

Ahead of his victory, the Russian defeated German Dominik Koepfer (6-3, 6-4, 5-7, 6-3) and Serb Miomir Kecmanovic (6-1, 5-0 ret.).

Machac, ranked No 34, won against Portuguese Nuno Borges (7-6 (3), 6-4, 6-3) and Argentinian Mariano Navone, the No 31 seed (6-2, 6-1, 3-6, 1-6, 6-1) in the previous rounds of the Roland-Garros 2024.

Sabalenka downs Badosa to reach fourth round

Second seed Aryna Sabalenka temporarily put her friendship with Spaniard Paula Badosa on the back burner to secure a hard-fought 7-5, 6-1 third-round victory at the French Open on Saturday and keep alive her hopes of a maiden Roland Garros title.

The pair have enjoyed a strong bond since 2021 but there was no quarter given in a see-sawing first set as they swapped early breaks before Badosa attacked Sabalenka's powerful serve in the sixth game, edging ahead with a return that hit the net cord.

"It's tough to play your best friend. She's an incredible player coming back after injury and I'm pretty sure she's going to be back on top very soon," said Sabalenka, who improved her head-to-head record with Badosa to 5-2.

"

Rybakina beats Mertens to reach last 16

World number four Elena Rybakina continued to fly under the radar as she enjoyed a routine 6-4 6-2 win over Belgium's Elise Mertens at the French Open on Saturday to ease into the fourth round.

Rybakina, a former Wimbledon champion, is looking to improve her best performance as quarter-finalist on the Paris red clay, in 2021.

The Russian-born Kazakh lost her serve twice in the first set but maintained the upper hand by breaking all of the Belgian's remaining serves in the set.

Strong shots and better serving in the second set allowed the 24-year-old Rybakina to end the match in little over an hour.

"In the second set, I was playing with a bit more confidence, and my serve improved," Rybakina said.

The two women had met five times previously, with the Kazakh leading by four wins to one.

In the fourth round, Rybakina will face Ukraine's 19th-ranked Elina Svitolina or 64th-ranked Romanian Ana Bogdan.

Rain has become the story at Roland Garros

Roland Garros—or the Drench Open, an unfortunate but appropriate moniker from wordsmith Chris Clarey—cannot catch a break when it comes to the weather. Rain has fallen in some form for the past seven days, which is to say the entire main draw schedule. Retractable roofs over Courts Philippe Chatrier and Suzanne Lenglen have received more use over one week than they may for the rest of this decade. —*AP*

Sharma cuts through Germany

HAMBURG, 1 JUNE

Shubhankar Sharma rose above an average season to move into the weekend rounds with cards of 73-72 at the European Open here on Saturday.

At 1-under after 36 holes, Sharma is tied at 38.

Sharma who shot three birdies and three bogeys in the first round had four birdies against three bogeys in the second at the Par-73 Porsche Nord Course at Green Eagle.

Meanwhile, Veer Ahlawat (79-70) and Om Prakash Chouhan (75-76) missed the cut.

It has been a modest season for Sharma, who has had just one top-10 finish with a tied 7th at the Singapore Classic and one top-20 finish with a tied 16th at Hero Indian.

Yet the Indian has made eight cuts in 11 starts in the 2023-24 season.

Laurie Canter will take a three-shot lead into the weekend after he posted a seven-under-par round of 66. There was a delay of three hours to round two tee times due to a flooded course but once play got underway. —*PTI*

Shubhankar Sharma PHOTO: PTI

IMPACT-PLAYER RULE IN IPL

Player must be revealed at toss: Ganguly

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

Former India captain and Delhi Capitals director of cricket Sourav Ganguly is in favor of continuing with the impact-player rule in IPL but wants teams to decide their picks at the toss.

The impact-player rule has become a hot topic of debate following the recently-concluded edition of IPL where scores over 250 runs were notched up eight times.

Ganguly added he wants the boundaries to be pushed further back in upcoming IPL editions.

"I like the impact player rule. My only thing with IPL is that I just want the grounds to be a bit bigger. The fences should go a little behind," Ganguly told the media on the sidelines of the International Procurement and Supply Chain Conference organized by the Blue Ocean Corporation.

"It is a great tournament. The only thing you can do with the impact player is decide before the toss, so it's a bit of skill there.

"So, have the impact player revealed before because that will require a lot of skill and game plan. But, I am all for the impact player," the former India skipper said.

Ganguly defended Prithvi Shaw, who had a below-par IPL season this year, saying he is still young and learning the tricks of the shortest format.

"He (Prithvi Shaw) is a young kid. He is just 23. He is still learning how to play T20 cricket. He is a very fine talent and he will get better. Sometimes, we expect too much too early from everyone and I am sure Prithvi, with the skills he has, will do well," he added.

Ganguly said wicketkeeper-batter Rishabh Pant had started playing like the cricketer he was before the car crash in 2022.

"He was superb for us (DC) in the IPL. I was so happy to see the way he came back because I have always said that he is a special player," Ganguly said. "Even earlier, I have said that he is exceptional. You don't want such talent to be lost for such disastrous reasons (accident). He has worked hard to get back to where he is and he is the Rishabh Pant of old." —*PTI*

Sourav Ganguly PHOTO: PTI

Gambhir would be good coach for India: Sourav Ganguly

MUMBAI, 1 JUNE

Former India captain Sourav Ganguly on Saturday said Gautam Gambhir would be a "good coach" for the national cricket team if he applied for the job as his "hunger and passion" was evident in the recently-concluded IPL. Speaking at the inauguration of the International Procurement and Supply Chain Conference organized by the Blue Ocean Corporation, Ganguly also gave his views on India's chances in the upcoming T20 World Cup. The former BCCI President said he is in favor of the national team having an Indian coach since there is enough talent in the country. "I am in favor of an Indian coach because we have enormous talent in our country, enormously high-skilled players who have done wonders for Indian cricket and very rightfully they should be a part of the system," Ganguly said. —*PTI*

Manu wins gold in javelin throw at Taiwan Open

NEW DELHI, 1 JUNE

India's DP Manu clinched the gold medal in the men's javelin throw event at the Taiwan Open 2024 with a throw of 81.58m in Taipei on Saturday.

The Asian Athletics Championship silver medallist registered his best throw in his last attempt. Taiwan Open is a World Athletics Continental Tour Bronze-level meet. and awards crucial ranking points.

Manu started with a 78.32m throw, while his second attempt measured 76.80m.

But the 24-year-old improved his efforts sending the spear to 80.59m and 81.52m in his third and fifth attempts. He could not register a valid attempt in his fourth throw but finished strong.

The performance was, however, far from Manu's personal best of 84.35m. It is also less than his season-best effort of 82.06, which had come last month at the Federation Cup in Bhubaneswar when he had finished second behind Olympic champion Neeraj Chopra.

Manu, who finished sixth at the World Championships last year, is yet to qualify for the Paris Olympics, the qualification mark for which is 85.50m.

Chopra and Kishore Jena have already qualified for the Olympics. —*PTI*

DP Manu PHOTO: PTI